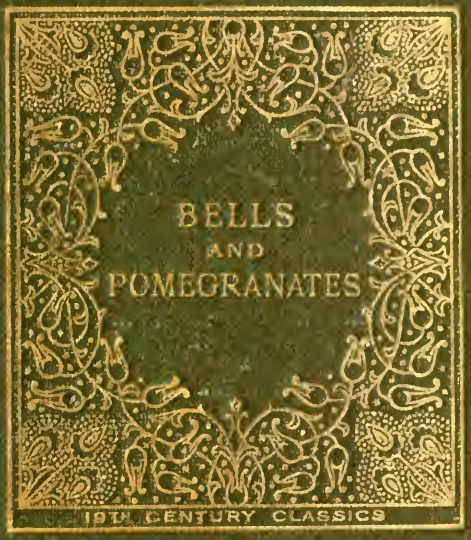
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XIX^th Century Classics

Edited by Clement K. Shorter

BELLS AND POMEGRANATES

Robert Browning

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BELLS AND POMEGRANATES

BY ROBERT BROWNING

FIRST SERIES

WITH A PREFACE & NOTES

BY THOMAS J. WISE

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PREFACE.

ALTHOUGH his first book was published so long ago as 1833; although some twenty or more Societies have been for the past sixteen years engaged in studying his works; although for seven years he has rested in his grave in Westminster Abbey,—the British Public has not yet learned to know Robert Browning, and has hitherto neglected to place itself upon terms of intimacy with the wonderful series of writings his vigorous and fruitful pen has left behind.

For this neglect no excuse can in future be advanced. The high price at which the works of Robert Browning have so far been published, has naturally restricted to a comparatively narrow circle those who have acquired and read them. The expiration of the copyrights of a large proportion of the poems has made it possible for these earlier books to be issued in a cheap and handy form, such as will place them within the reach of all whose taste inclines towards them. The mass of Browning's work offers itself readily for division into three clearly defined periods, and it is matter for congratulation that the product of the first period, that which terminated in 1864 with the publication of "Dramatis Personæ," embraces the greater part of

Browning's poetry which is most calculated to become generally admired, and to take a firm and lasting hold upon popular appreciation.

The two charges most frequently and most successfully brought against the poetry of Robert Browning are, firstly, *obscurity of thought*, and, secondly, *roughness of execution*. That these charges are amply justified cannot be gainsaid. But, upon the other hand, it is also a fact beyond reasonable dispute that these faults of mannerism, grave though they be, are more than amply atoned for by the wealth of bright and vivid poetry to be found, mainly, in the earlier volumes, almost hidden and buried by the bulk and weight of the heavier work.

With the exception of "Prospice" from ("Dramatis Personæ"), and some half dozen of the pieces contained in the two volumes of "Men and Women," no selection could possibly be made more adapted to the perusal of a reader approaching for the first time the writings of Robert Browning, than the series of poems and plays united under the general title of "Bells and Pomegranates."[1] Nowhere is Browning's lyrical faculty more

[1] This happy title was certainly a poetic inspiration. It is thus explained by the poet in a Note appended to the eighth (the final) number :

"Here ends my first Series of 'Bells and Pomegranates,' and I take the opportunity of explaining, in reply to inquiries, that I only meant by that title to indicate an endeavour towards something like an alternation, or mixture, of music with discoursing, sound with sense, poetry with thought; which looks ambitious, thus expressed, so the symbol was preferred. It is little to the purpose, that such is actually one of the most familiar of the many Rabbinical (and Patristic) acceptations of the phrase; because I confess that, letting authority alone, I supposed the

pronounced than in the ringing "Cavalier Tunes;" nowhere is his earnest tenderness more apparent than in "A Blot in the 'Scutcheon," or "Colombe's Birthday." Where can sweeter word-music be found than in "The Flower's Name" or "In a Gondola?" Considering how vastly its circulation has been hindered by the necessary restrictions of copyright, is there any English poem published within the last fifty years more widely known than "The Pied Piper of Hamelin?"

The collection of "Bells and Pomegranates" was originally published by Edward Moxon in eight thin paper-wrappered pamphlets, the total price of the eight amounting to ten shillings. As might naturally be expected, by far the larger proportion of these slender pamphlets have now ceased to exist, and to gather together a complete set of them is a matter of extreme difficulty. Thus they have come to be numbered among the collector's treasures. But to the student they are as welcome as they are to the collector. Browning never rested from polishing and retouching these his earlier, and favourite works; and were one to read carefully "Pippa Passes," for example, as it appeared in 1841, and then turn to the same work as it stands in its final form, whole sections of the poem-

bare words, in such juxtaposition, would sufficiently convey the desired meaning. 'Faith and good works' is another fancy, for instance, and perhaps no easier to arrive at: yet Giotto placed a pomegranate fruit in the hand of Dante, and *Raffaelle crowned his Theology* (*in the* '*Camera della Segnatura*') with blossoms of the same; as if the Bellari and Vasari would be sure to come after, and explain that it was merely 'simbolo delle buone opere —il quale Pomogranato fu però usato nelle vesti del Pontefice oppresso gli Ebrei.'—R. B."

play would be found to have been altered almost past recognition. So long and so lovingly did the poet brood over his nestling before he allowed himself to leave it to its flight.

It may therefore be confidently anticipated that the present re-issue of "Bells and Pomegranates" will prove as acceptable to the old "Browningite" as it will to the reader who through its pages makes for the first time an acquaintance with the author of "The Ring and the Book." The former will now have access to the original text, and will be enabled to contrast it with the revised reading, the whole of the poems and plays having been printed precisely from the first edition of 1841-46.

THOMAS J. WISE.

CHRONOLOGY OF ROBERT BROWNING.

Robert Browning born in Southampton Street, Peckham,	7th May	1812
Attended lectures at University College, Gower Street		1829-30
Published "Pauline"		1833
Visited St. Petersburg		1833
First visited Italy		1833
Published "Paracelsus"		1835
,, "Strafford"		1837
,, "Sordello"		1840
,, "Bells and Pomegranates" No. 1 ("Pippa Passes")		1841
Published "Bells and Pomegranates," No. 2 ("King Victor and King Charles")		1842
Published "Bells and Pomegranates," No. 3 ("Dramatic Lyrics")		1842
Published "Bells and Pomegranates," No. 4 ("The Return of the Druses")		1843
Published "Bells and Pomegranates," No. 5 ("A Blot in the 'Scutcheon")		1843
Published "Bells and Pomegranates," No. 6 ("Colombe's Birthday"		1844
Published "Bells and Pomegranates," No. 7 ("Dramatic Romances and Lyrics")		1845
Published "Bells and Pomegranates," No. 8 ("Luria," and "A Soul's Tragedy")		1846
Married Elizabeth Barrett Barrett	12th September	1846
Robert Wiedemann Barrett Browning born	9th March	1849
Published "Christmas Eve and Easter Day"		1850

Chronology of Robert Browning.

Printed privately "Cleon"		1855
,, ,, "The Statue and the Bust"		1855
Published "Men and Women"		1856
Mrs. Browning died at Casa Guidi	29th June	1861
Printed privately "Gold Hair"		1864
Published "Dramatis Personæ"		1864
,, "The Ring and the Book" (vols. i. and ii.)		1868
,, "The Ring and the Book" (vols. iii. and iv.)		1869
,, "Balaustion's Adventure"		1871
,, "Fifine at the Fair"		1872
,, "Red-Cotton Night-Cap Country"		1873
,, "Aristophanes' Apology"		1875
,, "The Inn Album"		1875
,, "Pacchiarotto"		1876
,, "The Agamemnon of Æschylus"		1877
,, "La Saisiaz: The Two Poets of Crosic"		1878
,, "Dramatic Idylls" (First Series)		1879
,, "Dramatic Idylls" (Second Series)		1880
The Browning Society founded		1881
Published "Jocoseria"		1883
,, "Ferishtah's Fancies"		1884
,, "Parleyings with certain People of Importance in their Day		1887
Published "Asolando" (post dated 1890)		1889
Died at Asolo	12th December	1889
Interred in Westminster Abbey	31st December	1889
"Prose Life of Strafford" (mainly by John Forster) Attributed to Browning by Dr. F. J. Furnivall, and republished		1892

List of Works dealing with the Life and Writings of Robert Browning.

(i.) *Biography.*

"Life of Robert Browning." By William Sharp. 8vo.	1890
"Life and Letters of Robert Browning." By Mrs. Sutherland Orr. 8vo.	1891

(ii.) *Bibliography.*

"A Bibliography of Robert Browning" (1833-1881). By Dr. F. J. Furnivall. 8vo. 1881

[Forming a portion of Part I. of "The Browning Society's Papers."]

"A Complete Bibliography of the Writings in Prose and Verse of Robert Browning." By Thomas J. Wise. 8vo. 1897

(iii.) *Criticism.*

"Essays on Robert Browning's Poetry." By John T. Nettleship. 8vo. 1868

"Balaustion's Adventure." By H. Buxton Forman. 8vo. 1872

"Browning's Women." By Mary E. Burt. 8vo. . . 1877

"Sordello, a Story from Robert Browning." By Frederick May Holland. 8vo. 1881

"The Browning Society's Papers" (1881-1896). Thirteen Parts. 8vo. 1896

"Stories from Browning." By Frederick May Holland. 8vo. 1882

"Robert Browning. The Thoughts of a Poet on Art and Faith." By Howard S. Pearson. 4to. . . 1885

"A Handbook to the Works of Robert Browning." By Mrs. Sutherland Orr. 8vo. 1885

[*Several times reprinted, with revisions.*]

"Miss Alma Murray's 'Constance' in Robert Browning's 'In a Balcony.'" By B. L. Moseley, LL.B. 8vo. . 1885

"Sordello's Story, retold in Prose." By Annie Wall. 8vo. 1886

"An Introduction to the Study of Robert Browning's Poetry." By Hiram Corson, LL.D. 8vo. . . 1886

"Robert Browning's Poetry: Outline Studies." Published for the Chicago Browning Society. 8vo. . . 1886

[*A limited number of copies were placed on sale in London.*]

"Sordello: A History and a Poem." By Caroline H. Dall. 8vo. 1886

"An Introduction to the Study of Browning." By Arthur Symons. 8vo. 1886

"Studies in the Poetry of Robert Browning." By James Fotheringham. 8vo. 1887

Browningana.

"A Sequence of Sonnets on the Death of Robert Browning." By Algernon Charles Swinburne. 4to. . . 1890
"Robert Browning: Chief Poet of the Age." By William G. Kingsland. 8vo. 1890
"Robert Browning: Chief Poet of the Age. New Edition, with Biographical and other Additions." By William G. Kingsland. 8vo. 1890
"Sordello. An Outline Analysis of Mr. Browning's Poem." By Jeanie Morrison. 8vo. . . . 1889
"Robert Browning." By Louise Manning Hodgkins. 8vo. 1889
"Robert Browning. Essays and Thoughts." By John T. Nettleship. 8vo. 1890
"Robert Browning Personalia." By Edmund Gosse. 8vo. 1890
"Robert Browning." By Gerald H. Rendall. 8vo. . 1890
"Browning's Message to his Time." By Edward Berdoe. 8vo. 1890
"Robert Browning and the Drama." By Walter Fairfax. 8vo. 1891
"A Primer on Browning." By Mary F. Wilson. 8vo. . 1891
"Browning's Criticism of Life." By William F. Revell. 8vo. 1892
"Of 'Fifine at the Fair,' 'Christmas Eve and Easter Day,' and other of Browning's Poems." By Jeanie Morrison. 8vo. 1892
"The Browning Cyclopædia." By Edward Berdoe. 8vo. 1892
"Browning Studies." Edited by Edward Berdoe. 8vo. 1895
"Browning and the Christian Faith." By Edward Berdoe. 8vo. 1896
"An Introduction to Robert Browning." By Bancroft Cooke. 8vo. . . . . [*No Date.*]

PIPPA PASSES.

Pippa Passes.

New Year's Day at Asolo in the Trevisan. A large, mean, airy Chamber. A girl, PIPPA, *from the silk-mills, springing out of bed.*

DAY!
Faster and more fast
O'er night's brim day boils at last;
Boils, pure gold, o'er the cloud-cup's brim
Where spurting and suppressed it lay—
For not a froth-flake touched the rim
Of yonder gap in the solid gray
Of eastern cloud an hour away—
But forth one wavelet then another curled,
Till the whole sunrise, not to be suppressed,
Rose-reddened, and its seething breast
Flickered in bounds, grew gold, then overflowed the world.
Day, if I waste a wavelet of thee,
Aught of my twelve-hours' treasure—
One of thy gazes, one of thy glances,
(Grants thou art bound to, gifts above measure,)
One of thy choices, one of thy chances,
(Tasks God imposed thee, freaks at thy pleasure,)
Day, if I waste such labour or leisure

Shame betide Asolo, mischief to me!
But in turn, Day, treat me not
As happy tribes—so happy tribes! who live
At hand—the common, other creatures' lot—
Ready to take when thou wilt give,
Prepared to pass what thou refusest;
Day, 'tis but Pippa thou ill-usest
If thou prove sullen, me, whose old year's sorrow
Who except thee can chase before to-morrow,
Seest thou, my day? Pippa's—who mean to borrow
Only of thee strength against new year's sorrow:
For let thy morning scowl on that superb
Great haughty Ottima—can scowl disturb
Her Sebald's homage? And if noon shed gloom
O'er Jules and Phene—what care bride and groom
Save for their dear selves? Then, obscure thy eve
With mist—will Luigi and Madonna grieve
—The mother and the child—unmatched, forsooth,
She in her age as Luigi in his youth,
For true content? And once again, outbreak
In storm at night on Monsignor they make
Such stir to-day about, who foregoes Rome
To visit Asolo, his brother's home,
And say there masses proper to release
The soul from pain—what storm dares hurt that peace?
But Pippa—just one such mischance would spoil,
Bethink thee, utterly next twelvemonth's toil
At wearisome silk-winding, coil on coil!

And here am I letting time slip for nought
You fool-hardy sunbeam—caught

Pippa Passes.

With a single splash from my ewer!
You that mocked the best pursuer,
Was my basin over-deep?
One splash of water ruins you asleep
And up, up, fleet your brilliant bits
Wheeling and counterwheeling,
Reeling, crippled beyond healing—
Grow together on the ceiling,
That will task your wits!
Whoever it was first quenched fire hoped to see
Morsel after morsel flee
As merrily,
As giddily . . . what lights he on—
Where settles himself the cripple?
Oh never surely blown, my martagon?
New-blown, though!—ruddy as a nipple,
Plump as the flesh bunch on some Turk bird's poll!
Be sure if corals, branching 'neath the ripple
Of ocean, bud there,—fairies watch unroll
Such turban flowers . . I say, such lamps disperse
Thick red flame thro' that dusk green universe!
Queen of thee, floweret,
Each fleshy blossom
Keep I not, safer
Than leaves that embower it
Or shells that embosom,
From weevil and chafer?
Laugh thro' my pane then, solicit the bee,
Gibe him, be sure, and in midst of thy glee
Worship me!

Worship whom else? for am I not this Day

Whate'er I please? Who shall I seem to-day?
Morn, Noon, Eve, Night—how must I spend my Day?

Up the hill-side, thro' the morning,
Love me as I love!
I am Ottima, take warning,
And the gardens, and stone house above,
And other house for shrubs, all glass in front,
Are mine, and Sebald steals as he is wont
To court me, and old Luca yet reposes,
And therefore till the shrub-house door uncloses
I . . . what now? give abundant cause for prate
Of me (that 's Ottima)—too bold of late,
By far too confident she'll still face down
The spitefullest of talkers in our town—
How we talk in the little town below!

But love, love, love, there 's better love I know!
This love 's only day's first offer—
Next love shall defy the scoffer:
For do not bride and bridegroom sally
Out of Possagno church at noon?
Their house looks over Orcana valley—
Why not be the bride as soon
As Ottima? I saw, myself, beside,
Arrive last night that bride—
Saw, if you call it seeing her, one flash
Of the pale snow-pure cheek and blacker tresses
Than . . . not the black eyelash;
A wonder she contrives those lids no dresses
—So strict was she the veil
Should cover close her pale

Pure cheeks—a bride to look at and scarce touch,
Remember Jules!—for are not such
Used to be tended, flower-like, every feature,
As if one's breath would fray the lily of a creature?
Oh, save that brow its virgin dimness,
Keep that foot its lady primness,
Let those ancles never swerve
From their exquisite reserve,
Yet have to trip along the streets like me
All but naked to the knee!
How will she ever grant her Jules a bliss
So startling as her real first infant kiss?
Oh—no—not envy this!
Not envy sure, for, if you gave me
Leave to take or to refuse
In earnest, do you think I'd choose
That sort of new love to enslave me?
Mine should have lapped me round from the beginning
As little fear of losing it as winning—
Why look you! when at eve the pair
Commune inside our turret, what prevents
My being Luigi?—While that mossy lair
Of lizards thro' the winter-time, is stirred
With each to each imparting sweet intents
For this new year, as brooding bird to bird—
I will be cared about, kept out of harm
And schemed for, safe in love as with a charm,
I will be Luigi . . . if I only knew
What was my father like . . . my mother too!

Nay, if you come to that, the greatest love of all

Is God's: well then, to have God's love befall
Oneself as in the palace by the dome
Where Monsignor to-night will bless the home
Of his dead brother! I, to-night at least,
Will be that holy and beloved priest.

Now wait—even I myself already ought to share
In that—why else should new year's hymn declare

All service ranks the same with God:
If now, as formerly he trod
Paradise, God's presence fills
Our earth, and each but as God wills
Can work—God's puppets, best and worst,
Are we; there is no last nor first.

Say not, a small event! Why small?
Costs it more pain this thing ye call
A great event should come to pass
Than that? Untwine me, from the mass
Of deeds that make up life, one deed
Power shall fall short in or exceed!

And more of it, and more of it—oh, yes!
So that my passing, and each happiness
I pass, will be alike important—prove
That true! oh yes—the brother,
The bride, the lover, and the mother,—
Only to pass whom will remove—
Whom a mere look at half will cure
The Past, and help me to endure
The Coming . . . I am just as great, no doubt,

As they!
A pretty thing to care about
So mightily—this single holiday!
Why repine?
With thee to lead me, Day of mine,
Down the grass path gray with dew,
'Neath the pine-wood, blind with boughs,
Where the swallow never flew
As yet, nor cicale dared carouse:
No, dared carouse! [*She enters the Street.*

I.—*Morning. Up the Hill-side. The Shrub House.* LUCA'S *Wife* OTTIMA, *and her Paramour the German* SEBALD.

Seb. (Sings.) *Let the watching lids wink!*
Day's a-blaze with eyes, think,—
Deep into the night drink!

Otti. Night? What, a Rhineland night, then?
How these tall
Naked geraniums straggle! Push the lattice—
Behind that frame.—Nay, do I bid you?—Sebald,
It shakes the dust down on me! Why, of course
The slide-bolt catches—Well, are you content,
Or must I find you something else to spoil?
Kiss and be friends, my Sebald. Is it full morning?
Oh, don't speak then!

Seb. Ay, thus it used to be!
Ever your house was, I remember, shut
Till mid-day—I observed that, as I strolled

On mornings thro' the vale here : country girls
Were noisy, washing garments in the brook—
Herds drove the slow white oxen up the hills—
But no, your house was mute, would ope no eye—
And wisely—you were plotting one thing there,
Nature another outside : I looked up—
Rough white wood shutters, rusty iron bars,
Silent as death, blind in a flood of light,
Oh, I remember !—and the peasants laughed
And said, " The old man sleeps with the young wife ! "
This house was his, this chair, this window—his.

Otti. Ah, the clear morning ! I can see St. Mark's :
That black streak is the belfry—stop : Vicenza
Should lie—there 's Padua, plain enough, that blue.
Look o'er my shoulder—follow my finger—

Seb. Morning ?
It seems to me a night with a sun added :
Where 's dew ? where 's freshness ? That bruised plant
I bruised
In getting thro' the lattice yestereve,
Droops as it did. See, here 's my elbow's mark
In the dust on the sill.

Otti. Oh shut the lattice, pray !

Seb. Let me lean out. I cannot scent blood here
Foul as the morn may be—
There, shut the world out !
How do you feel now, Ottima ? There—curse
The world, and all outside ! Let us throw off
This mask : how do you bear yourself ? Let 's out
With all of it !

Otti. Best never speak of it.

Seb. Best speak again and yet again of it,

Till words cease to be more than words. "His blood,"
For instance—let those two words mean "His blood"
And nothing more. Notice—I'll say them now,
"His blood."
Otti. Assuredly if I repented
The deed—
Sob. Repent? who should repent, or why?
What puts that in your head? Did I once say
That I repented?
Otti. No—I said the deed—
Seb. "The deed" and "the event"—and just now it was
"Our passion's fruit"—the devil take such cant!
Say, once and always, Luca was a wittol,
I am his cut-throat, you are—
Otti. Here is the wine—
I brought it when we left the house above—
And glasses too—wine of both sorts. Black? white, then?
Seb. But am not I his cut-throat? What are you?
Otti. There trudges on his business from the Duomo,
Benet the Capuchin, with his brown hood
And bare feet—always in one place at church,
Close under the stone wall by the south entry
I used to take him for a brown cold piece
Of the wall's self, as out of it he rose
To let me pass—at first, I say, I used—
Now—so has that dumb figure fastened on me—
I rather should account the plastered wall
A piece of him, so chilly does it strike.
This, Sebald?

Seb. No—the white wine—the white wine!
Well, Ottima, I promised no new year
Should rise on us the ancient shameful way,
Nor does it rise—pour on—To your black eyes!
Do you remember last damned New Year's day?
Otti. You brought those foreign prints. We looked at them
Over the wine and fruit. I had to scheme
To get him from the fire. Nothing but saying
His own set wants the proof-mark roused him up
To hunt them out.
Seb. Faith, he is not alive
To fondle you before my face.
Otti. Do you
Fondle me then: who means to take your life
For that, my Sebald?
Seb. Hark you, Ottima,
One thing 's to guard against. We'll not make much
One of the other—that is, not make more
Parade of warmth, childish officious coil,
Than yesterday—as if, sweet, I supposed
Proof upon proof was needed now, now first,
To show I love you—still love you—love you
In spite of Luca and what's come to him.
—Sure sign we had him ever in our thoughts,
White sneering old reproachful face and all—
We 'll even quarrel, love, at times, as if
We still could lose each other—were not tied
By this—conceive you?
Otti. Love—
Seb. Not tied so sure—
Because tho' I was wrought upon—have struck

His insolence back into him—am I
So surely yours?—therefore, forever yours?
Otti. Love, to be wise, (one counsel pays another)
Should we have—months ago—when first we loved,
For instance that May morning we two stole
Under the green ascent of sycamores—
If we had come upon a thing like that
Suddenly—
Seb. "A thing" . . there again—"a thing!"
Otti. Then, Venus' body, had we come upon
My husband Luca Gaddi's murdered corpse
Within there, at his couch-foot, covered close—
Would you have pored upon it? Why persist
In poring now upon it? For 'tis here—
As much as there in the deserted house—
You cannot rid your eyes of it: for me,
Now he is dead I hate him worse—I hate—
Dare you stay here? I would go back and hold
His two dead hands, and say, I hate you worse
Luca, than—
Seb. Off, off; take your hands off mine!
'Tis the hot evening—off! oh, morning, is it?
Otti. There's one thing must be done—you know
what thing.
Come in and help to carry. We may sleep
Anywhere in the whole wide house to-night.
Seb. What would come, think you, if we let him lie
Just as he is? Let him lie there until
The angels take him: he is turned by this
Off from his face, beside, as you will see.
Otti. This dusty pane might serve for looking-glass.
Three, four—four grey hairs! is it so you said

A plait of hair should wave across my neck?
No—this way!
Seb. Ottima, I would give your neck,
Each splendid shoulder, both those breasts of yours,
This were undone! Killing?—Let the world die
So Luca lives again!—Ay, lives to sputter
His fulsome dotage on you—yes, and feign
Surprise that I returned at eve to sup,
When all the morning I was loitering here—
Bid me dispatch my business and begone.
I would—
Otti. See!
Seb. No, I'll finish. Do you think
I fear to speak the bare truth once for all?
All we have talked of is at bottom fine
To suffer—there 's a recompense in that:
One must be venturous and fortunate—
What is one young for else? In age we'll sigh
O'er the wild, reckless, wicked days flown over:
But to have eaten Luca's bread—have worn
His clothes, have felt his money swell my purse—
Why, I was starving when I used to call
And teach you music—starving while you pluck'd
Me flowers to smell!
Otti. My poor lost friend!
Seb. He gave me
Life—nothing less: what if he did reproach
My perfidy, and threaten, and do more—
Had he no right? What was to wonder at?
Why must you lean across till our cheeks touch'd?
Could he do less than make pretence to strike me?
'Tis not the crime's sake—I'd commit ten crimes

Greater, to have this crime wiped out—undone!
And you—O, how feel you? feel you for me?
Otti. Well, then—I love you better now than ever—
And best (look at me while I speak to you)—
Best for the crime—nor do I grieve in truth
This mask, this simulated ignorance,
This affectation of simplicity
Falls off our crime; this naked crime of ours
May not be looked over—look it down, then!
Great? let it be great—but the joys it brought
Pay they or no its price? Come—they or it!
Speak not! The past, would you give up the past
Such as it is, pleasure and crime together?
Give up that noon I owned my love for you—
The garden's silence—even the single bee
Persisting in his toil, suddenly stopt
And where he hid you only could surmise
By some campanula's chalice set a-swing
As he clung there—"Yes, I love you."
Seb. And I drew
Back: put far back your face with both my hands
Lest you should grow too full of me—your face
So seemed athirst for my whole soul and body!
Otti. And when I ventured to receive you here,
Made you steal hither in the mornings—
Seb. When
I used to look up 'neath the shrub-house here
Till the red fire on its glazed windows spread
Into a yellow haze?
Otti. Ah—my sign was, the sun
Inflamed the sere side of yon chestnut-tree
Nipt by the first frost—

Seb. You would always laugh
At my wet boots—I had to stride thro' grass
Over my ancles.
Otti. Then our crowning night—
Seb. The July night?
Otti. The day of it too, Sebald!
When heaven's pillars seemed o'erbowed with heat,
Its black-blue canopy seemed let descend
Close on us both, to weigh down each to each,
And smother up all life except our life.
So lay we till the storm came.
Seb. How it came!
Otti. Buried in woods we lay, you recollect;
Swift ran the searching tempest overhead;
And ever and anon some bright white shaft
Burnt thro' the pine-tree roof—here burnt and there,
As if God's messenger thro' the close wood screen
Plunged and replunged his weapon at a venture,
Feeling for guilty thee and me—then broke
The thunder like a whole sea overhead—
Seb. Yes.
Otti. While I stretched myself upon you, hands
To hands, my mouth to your hot mouth, and shook
All my locks loose, and covered you with them.
You, Sebald, the same you—
Seb. Slower, Ottima—
Otti. And as we lay—
Seb. Less vehemently—Love me—
Forgive me—take not words—mere words—to heart—
Your breath is worse than wine—breathe slow, speak slow—
Do not lean on me—

Otti. Sebald, as we lay,
Rising and falling only with our pants,
Who said, "Let death come now—'tis right to die!
Right to be punished—nought completes such bliss
But woe!" Who said that?

Seb. How did we ever rise?
Was't that we slept? Why did it end?

Otti. I felt
You tapering to a point the ruffled ends
Of my loose locks 'twixt both your humid lips—
(My hair is fallen now—knot it again).

Seb. I kiss you now, dear Ottima, now and now;
This way? will you forgive me—be once more
My great queen?

Otti. Bind it thrice about my brow;
Crown me your queen, your spirit's arbitress,
Magnificent in sin. Say that!

Seb. I crown you
My great white queen, my spirit's arbitress,
Magnificent—

[*Without.*] The year 's at the spring,
And day 's at the morn:
Morning 's at seven;
The hill-side 's dew-pearled:
The lark 's on the wing,
The snail 's on the thorn;
God 's in his heaven—
All 's right with the world! [Pippa *passes.*

Seb. God 's in his heaven! Do you hear that? Who spoke?

You, you spoke !
Otti. Oh—that little ragged girl :
She must have rested on the step—we give
Them but one holiday the whole year round—
Did you e'er see our silk-mills—their inside ?
There are ten silk-mills now belong to you.
She stops to pick my double heartsease . . . Sh !
She does not hear—you call out louder !
Seb. Leave me !
Go, get your clothes on—dress those shoulders.
Otti. Sebald ?
Seb. Wipe off that paint. I hate you !
Otti. Miserable !
Seb. My God ! and she is emptied of it now !
Outright now !—how miraculously gone
All of the grace—had she not strange grace once ?
Why, the blank cheek hangs listless as it likes,
No purpose holds the features up together,
Only the cloven brow and puckered chin
Stay in their places—and the very hair,
That seemed to have a sort of life in it,
Drops a dead web !
Otti. Speak to me—not of me !
Seb. That round great full-orbed face, where not an angle
Broke the delicious indolence—all broken !
Otti. Ungrateful—to me—not of me—perjured cheat—
A coward too—but ingrate 's worse than all :
Beggar—my slave—a fawning, cringing lie !
Leave me !—betray me !—I can see your drift—
A lie that walks, and eats, and drinks !

Seb. My God!
Those morbid, olive, faultless shoulder-blades—
I should have known there was no blood beneath!
Otti. You hate me, then? you hate me then?
Seb. To think
She would succeed in her absurd attempt
And fascinate with sin! and show herself
Superior—Guilt from its excess, superior
To Innocence. That little peasant's voice
Has righted all again. Though I be lost,
I know which is the better, never fear,
Of vice or virtue, purity or lust,
Nature, or trick—I see what I have done
Entirely now. Oh, I am proud to feel
Such torments—let the world take credit that
I, having done my deed, pay too its price!
I hate, hate—curse you! God's in his heaven!
Otti. Me!
Me! no, no Sebald—not yourself—kill me!
Mine is the whole crime—do but kill me—then
Yourself—then—presently—first hear me speak—
I always meant to kill myself—wait you!
Lean on my breast . . not as a breast; don't love me
The more because you lean on me, my own
Heart's Sebald. There—there—both deaths presently!
Seb. My brain is drowned now—quite drowned: all I feel
Is . . . is at swift-recurring intervals,
A hurrying-down within me, as of waters
Loosened to smother up some ghastly pit—

There they go—whirls from a black, fiery sea.
Otti. Not me—to him oh God be merciful!

Talk by the way in the mean time. Foreign Students *of Painting and Sculpture, from Venice, assembled opposite the house of* JULES, *a young French Statuary.*

1 *Stu.* Attention: my own post is beneath this window, but the pomegranate-clump yonder will hide three or four of you with a little squeezing, and Schramm and his pipe must lie flat in the balcony. Four, five—who's a defaulter? Jules must not be suffered to hurt his bride.

2 *Stu.* The poet's away—never having much meant to be here, moonstrike him! He was in love with himself, and had a fair prospect of thriving in his suit, when suddenly a woman fell in love with him too, and out of pure jealousy, he takes himself off to Trieste, immortal poem and all—whereto is this prophetical epitaph appended already, as Bluphocks assured me: —"*The author on the author. Here so and so, the mammoth, lies, Fouled to death by butterflies.*" His own fault, the simpleton! Instead of cramp couplets, each like a knife in your entrails, he should write, says Bluphocks, both classically and intelligibly.—*Æsculapius, an epic. Catalogue of the drugs:—Hebe's plaister —One strip Cools your lip; Phœbus' emulsion—One bottle Clears your throttle: Mercury's bolus—One box Cures . . .*

3 *Stu.* Subside, my fine fellow; if the marriage was

over by ten o'clock, Jules will certainly be here in a minute with his bride.

2 *Stu.* So should the poet's muse have been acceptable, says Bluphocks, and Delia not better known to our dogs than the boy.

1 *Stu.* To the point, now. Where 's Gottlieb? Oh, listen, Gottlieb—What called down this piece of friendly vengeance on Jules, of which we now assemble to witness the winding-up. We are all in a tale, observe, when Jules bursts out on us by and bye: I shall be spokesman, but each professes himself alike insulted by this strutting stone-squarer, who came singly from Paris to Munich, thence with a crowd of us to Venice and Possagno here, but proceeds in a day or two alone,—oh! alone, indubitably—to Rome and Florence. He take up his portion with these dissolute, brutalized, heartless bunglers! (Is Schramm brutalized? Am I heartless?)

Gott. Why, somewhat heartless; for, coxcomb as much as you choose, you will have brushed off—what do folks style it?—the bloom of his life. Is it too late to alter? These letters, now, you call his. I can't laugh at them.

4 *Stu.* Because you never read the sham letters of our inditing which drew forth these.

Gott. His discovery of the truth will be frightful.

4 *Stu.* That 's the joke. But you should have joined us at the beginning; there 's no doubt he loves the girl.

Gott. See here: "He has been accustomed," he writes, "to have Canova's women about him, in stone, and the world's women beside him, in flesh, these being

as much below, as those above, his soul's aspiration; but now he is to have" . . . There you laugh again! You wipe off the very dew of his youth.

1 *Stu.* Schramm (take the pipe out of his mouth, somebody), will Jules lose the bloom of his youth?

Schramm. Nothing worth keeping is ever lost in this world: look at a blossom—it drops presently and fruits succeed; as well affirm that your eye is no longer in your body because its earliest favourite is dead and done with, as that any affection is lost to the soul when its first object is superseded in due course. Has a man done wondering at women? There follow men, dead and alive, to wonder at. Has he done wondering at men? There's God to wonder at: and the faculty of wonder may be at the same time grey enough with respect to its last object, and yet green sufficiently so far as concerns its novel one: thus . . .

1 *Stu.* Put Schramm's pipe into his mouth again—There you see! well, this Jules . . a wretched fribble—oh, I watched his disportings at Possagno the other day! The Model-Gallery—you know: he marches first resolvedly past great works by the dozen without vouchsafing an eye: all at once he stops full at the *Psiche-fanciulla*—cannot pass that old acquaintance without a nod of encouragement—"In your new place, beauty? Then behave yourself as well here as at Munich—I see you!"—Next posts himself deliberately before the unfinished *Pietà* for half an hour without moving, till up he starts of a sudden and thrusts his very nose into . . I say into—the group—by which you are informed that precisely the sole point he had not fully mastered in Canova was a certain method of

using the drill in the articulation of the knee-joint—and that, even, has he mastered at length! Good bye, therefore, to Canova—whose gallery no longer contains Jules the predestinated thinker in marble!

5 *Stu.* Tell him about the women—go on to the women.

1 *Stu.* Why, on that matter he could never be supercilious enough. How should we be other than the poor devils you see, with those debasing habits we cherish? He was not to wallow in that mire, at least: he would love at the proper time, and meanwhile put up with the *Psiche-fanciulla.* Now I happened to hear of a young Greek—real Greek girl at Malamocco, a true Islander, do you see, with Alciphron hair like seamoss—you know! White and quiet as an apparition, and fourteen years old at farthest; daughter, so she swears, of that hag Natalia, who helps us to models at three *lire* an hour. So first Jules received a scented letter—somebody had seen his Tydeus at the Academy, and my picture was nothing to it—bade him persevere—would make herself known to him ere long—(Paolina, my little friend, transcribes divinely.) Now think of Jules finding himself distinguished from the herd of us by such a creature! In his very first answer he proposed marrying his monitress; and fancy us over these letters two, three times a day to receive and dispatch! I concocted the main of it: relations were in the way—secrecy must be observed—would he wed her on trust and only speak to her when they were indissolubly united? St—St!

6 *Stu.* Both of them! Heaven's love, speak softly! speak within yourselves!

5 *Stu.* Look at the Bridegroom—half his hair in storm and half in calm—patted down over the left temple, like a frothy cup one blows on to cool it; and the same old blouse he murders the marble in!

2 *Stu.* Not a rich vest like yours, Hannibal Scratchy, rich that your face may the better set it off.

6 *Stu.* And the bride—and the bride—how magnificently pale!

Gott. She does not also take it for earnest, I hope?

1 *Stu.* Oh, Natalia's concern, that is; we settle with Natalia.

6 *Stu.* She does not speak—has evidently let out no word.

Gott. How he gazes on her!

1 *Stu.* They go in—now, silence!

II.—*Noon. Over Orcana. The House of* JULES, *who crosses its threshold with* PHENE—*she is silent, on which* JULES *begins*—

Do not die, Phene—I am yours now—you
Are mine now—let fate reach me how she likes
If you'll not die—so never die! Sit here—
My work-room's single seat—I do lean over
This length of hair and lustrous front—they turn
Like an entire flower upward—eyes—lips—last
Your chin—no, last your throat turns—'tis their scent
Pulls down my face upon you. Nay, look ever
That one way till I change, grow you—I could
Change into you, beloved!
Thou by me
And I by thee—this is thy hand in mine—

And side by side we sit—all's true. Thank God!
I have spoken—speak thou!
—O, my life to come!
My Tydeus must be carved that's there in clay,
And how be carved with you about the chamber?
Where must I place you? When I think that once
This room-full of rough block-work seemed my heaven
Without you! Shall I ever work again—
Get fairly into my old ways again—
Bid each conception stand while trait by trait
My hand transfers its lineaments to stone?
Will they, my fancies, live near you, my truth—
The live truth—passing and repassing me—
Sitting beside me?
Now speak!
Only, first,
Your letters to me—was't not well contrived?
A hiding-place in Psyche's robe—there lie
Next to her skin your letters: which comes foremost?
Good—this that swam down like a first moonbeam
Into my world.
Those? Books I told you of.
Let your first word to me rejoice them, too,—
This minion of Coluthus, writ in red
Bistre and azure by Bessarion's scribe—
Read this line . . no, shame—Homer's be the Greek!
My Odyssey in coarse black vivid type
With faded yellow blossoms 'twixt page and page;
"He said, and on Antinous directed
A bitter shaft"—then blots a flower the rest!
—Ah, do not mind that—better that will look
When cast in bronze . . an Almaign Kaiser that,

Swart-green and gold with truncheon based on hip—
This rather, turn to . . but a check already—
Or you had recognized that here you sit
As I imagined you, Hippolyta
Naked upon her bright Numidian horse!
—Forget you this then? "carve in bold relief" . . .
So you command me—"carve against I come
A Greek, bay-filleted and thunder-free,
Rising beneath the lifted myrtle-branch,
Whose turn arrives to praise Harmodius."—Praise him!
Quite round, a cluster of mere hands and arms
Thrust in all senses, all ways, from all sides,
Only consenting at the branches' end
They strain towards, serves for frame to a sole face—
(Place your own face)—the Praiser's, who with eyes
Sightless, so bend they back to light inside
His brain where visionary forms throng up,
(Gaze—I am your Harmodius dead and gone,)
Sings, minding nor the palpitating arch
Of hands and arms, nor the quick drip of wine
From the drenched leaves o'erhead, nor who cast off
Their violet crowns for him to trample on—
Sings, pausing as the patron-ghosts approve,
Devoutly their unconquerable hymn—
But you must say a "well" to that—say "well"
Because you gaze—am I fantastic, sweet?
Gaze like my very life's-stuff, marble—marbly
Even to the silence—and before I found
The real flesh Phene, I inured myself
To see throughout all nature varied stuff
For better nature's birth by means of art:
With me, each substance tended to one form

Of beauty—to the human Archetype—
And every side occurred suggestive germs
Of that—the tree, the flower—why, take the fruit,
Some rosy shape, continuing the peach,
Curved beewise o'er its bough, as rosy limbs
Depending nestled in the leaves—and just
From a cleft rose-peach the whole Dryad sprung!
But of the stuffs one can be master of,
How I divined their capabilities
From the soft-rinded smoothening facile chalk
That yields your outline to the air's embrace,
Down to the crisp imperious steel, so sure
To cut its one confided thought clean out
Of all the world: but marble!—'neath my tools
More pliable than jelly—as it were
Some clear primordial creature dug from deep
In the Earth's heart where itself breeds itself
And whence all baser substance may be worked;
Refine it off to air you may—condense it
Down to the diamond;—is not metal there
When o'er the sudden specks my chisel trips?
—Not flesh—as flake off flake I scale, approach,
Lay bare those blueish veins of blood asleep?
Lurks flame in no strange windings where, surprised
By the swift implement sent home at once,
Flushes and glowings radiate and hover
About its track?—
Phene? what—why is this?
Ah, you will die—I knew that you would die!

PHENE *begins, on his having long remained silent.*
Now the end 's coming—to be sure it must

Have ended sometime !—Tush—I will not speak
Their foolish speech—I cannot bring to mind
Half—so the whole were best unsaid—what care
I for Natalia now, or all of them ?
Oh, you . . what are you ?—I do not attempt
To say the words Natalia bade me learn
To please your friends, that I may keep myself
Where your voice lifted me—by letting you
Proceed . . but can you ?—even you perhaps
Cannot take up, now you have once let fall,
The music's life, and me along with it ?
No—or you would . . we'll stay then as we are
Above the world—
Now you sink—for your eyes
Are altered . . altering—stay—" I love you, love you,"—
I could prevent it if I understood
More of your words to me . . was't in the tone
Of the voice, your power ?
Stay, stay, I will repeat
Their speech, if that affects you ! only change
No more and I shall find it presently—
Far back here in the brain yourself filled up :
Natalia said (like Lutwyche) harm would follow
Unless I spoke their lesson to the end,
But harm to me, I thought, not you : and so
I'll speak it,—" Do not die, Phene, I am yours " . .
Stop—is not that, or like that, part of what
You spoke ? 'Tis not my fault—that I should lose
What cost such pains acquiring ! is this right ?
The Bard said, do one thing I can—
Love a man and hate a man

Supremely: thus my lore began.
Thro' the Valley of Love I went,
In its lovingest spot to abide;
And just on the verge where I pitched my tent
Dwelt Hate beside—
(And the bridegroom asked what the bard's smile meant
Of his bride.)
Next Hate I traversed, the Grove,
In its hatefullest nook to dwell—
And lo, where I flung myself prone, couched Love
Next cell.
(For not I, said the bard, but those black bride's eyes above
Should tell!)
(Then Lutwyche said you probably would ask,
"You have black eyes, love,—you are sure enough
My beautiful bride—do you, as he sings, tell
What needs some exposition—what is this?"
. . . And I am to go on, without a word,)
Once when I loved I would enlace
Breast, eyelids, hands, feet, form and face
Of her I loved in one embrace—
And, when I hated, I would plunge
My sword, and wipe with the first lunge
My foe's whole life out like a sponge:
—But if I would love and hate more
Than ever man hated or loved before—
Would seek in the Valley of Love
The spot, or in Hatred's grove
The spot where my soul may reach
The essence, nought less, of each. . .

(Here he said, if you interrupted me
With, "There must be some error,—who induced you
To speak this jargon?"—I was to reply
Simply—"Await till . . . until . ." I must say
Last rhyme again—)
. . The essence, nought less, of each—
The Hate of all Hates, or the Love
Of all Loves in its glen or its grove,
—I find them the very warders
Each of the other's borders.
So most I love when Love's disguised
In Hate's garb—'tis when Hate's surprised
In Love's weed that I hate most; ask
How Love can smile thro' Hate's barred iron casque
Hate grin thro' Love's rose-braided mask,
Of thy bride, Giulio!
(Then you, "Oh, not mine—
Preserve the real name of the foolish song!"
But I must answer, "Giulio—Jules—'tis Jules!)
Thus I, Jules, hating thee
Sought long and painfully. . .
[JULES *interposes.*
Lutwyche—who else? But all of them, no doubt,
Hated me—them at Venice—presently
For them, however! You I shall not meet—
If I dreamed, saying that would wake me. Keep
What 's here—this too—we cannot meet again
Consider and the money was but meant
For two years' travel, which is over now
All chance, or hope, or care, or need of it!
This—and what comes from selling these—my casts
And books, and medals except . . . let them go

Together—so the produce keeps you safe
Out of Natalia's clutches! If by chance
(For all 's chance here) I should survive the gang
At Venice, root out all fifteen of them,
We might meet somewhere since the world is wide.

1.

[*Without.*] Give her but a least excuse to love me!
When—where—
How—can this arm establish her above me
If fortune fixed my lady there—
—There already, to eternally reprove me?
(*Hist, said Kate the queen:*
—Only a page who carols unseen
Crumbling your hounds their messes.')

2

She 's wronged?—To the rescue of her honour,
My heart!
She 's poor?—What costs it to be styled a donor?
An earth 's to cleave, a sea 's to part!
—But that fortune should have thrust all this upon
her!
(*Nay, list, bade Kate the queen:*
Only a page that carols unseen,
Fitting your hawks their jesses!)—

[Pippa *passes.*

Kate? Queen Cornaro doubtless, who renounced
Cyprus to live and die the lady here
At Asolo—and whosoever loves
Must be in some sort god or worshipper,

The blessing, or the blest one—queen or page—
I find myself queen here it seems !
How strange !
Shall to produce form out of shapelessness
Be art—and, further, to evoke a soul
From form be nothing? This new soul is mine—
Now to kill Lutwyche what would that do?—Save
A wretched dauber men will hoot to death
Without me.
To Ancona—Greece—some isle !
I wanted silence only—there is clay
Every where. One may do whate'er one likes
In Art—the only thing is, to be sure
That one does like it—which takes pains to know.
Scatter all this, my Phene—this mad dream !
Who—what is Lutwyche—what Natalia—
What the whole world except our love—my own
Own Phene? But I told you, did I not,
Ere night we travel for your land—some isle
With the sea's silence on it? Stand aside—
I do but break these paltry models up
To begin art afresh. Shall I meet Lutwyche,
And save him from my statue's meeting him?
Some unsuspected isle in the far seas !
Like a god going thro' his world I trace
One mountain for a moment in the dusk,
Whole brotherhoods of cedars on its brow—
And you are ever by me while I trace
—Are in my arms as now—as now—as now !
Some unsuspected isle in the far seas !
Some unsuspected isle in far off seas !

Talk by the way in the mean time. Two or three of the Austrian Police loitering with BLUPHOCKS, *an English vagabond, just in view of the Turret.*

Bluphocks.[1] *Oh! were but every worm a maggot, Every fly a grig, Every bough a Christmas faggot, Every tune a jig!* In fact, I have abjured all religions, —but the last I inclined to was the Armenian—for I have travelled, do you see, and at Koenigsberg, Prussia Improper (so styled because there 's a sort of bleak hungry sun there,) you might remark over a venerable house-porch, a certain Chaldee inscription; and brief as it is, a mere glance at it used absolutely to change the mood of every bearded passenger. In they turned, one and all, the young and lightsome, with no irreverent pause, the aged and decrepit, with a sensible alacrity,—'twas the grand Rabbi's abode, in short. I lost no time in learning Syriac—(vowels, you dogs, follow my stick's end in the mud—*Celarent, Darii, Ferio!*) and one morning presented myself spelling-book in hand, a, b, c,—what was the purport of this miraculous posy? Some cherished legend of the past, you'll say—"*How Moses hocus-pocust Egypt's land with fly and locust,*"—or, "*How to Jonah sounded harshish, Get thee up and go to Tarshish,*"—or, "*How the angel meeting Balaam, Straight his ass returned a salaam,*" —in no wise! "*Shackabrach—Boach—somebody or other—Isaach, Re-cei-ver, Pur-cha-ser and Ex-chan-ger of—Stolen goods.*" So talk to me of obliging a bishop!

[1] "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

I have renounced all bishops save Bishop Beveridge—mean to live so—and die—*As some Greek dog-sage, dead and merry, Hellward bound in Charon's ferry—With food for both worlds, under and upper, Lupine-seed and Hecate's supper, And never an obolus* . . (it might be got in somehow) *Tho' Cerberus should gobble us—To pay the Stygian ferry*—or you might say, *Never an obol To pay for the coble* . . . . Though thanks to you, or this Intendant thro' you, or this Bishop thro' his Intendant—I possess a burning pocket-full of *zwanzigers.*

1 *Pol.* I have been noticing a house yonder this long while—not a shutter unclosed since morning.

2 *Pol.* Old Luca Gaddi's, that owns the silk-mills here: he dozes by the hour—wakes up, sighs deeply, says he should like to be Prince Metternich, and then dozes again after having bidden young Sebald, the foreigner, set his wife to playing draughts: never molest such a household, they mean well.

Blup. Only tell me who this little Pippa is I must have to do with—one could make something of that name. Pippa—that is, short for Felippa—*Panurge consults Hertrippa—Believ'st thou, King Agrippa?* Something might be done with that name.

2 *Pol.* Your head and a ripe musk-melon would not be dear at half a *zwanziger!* Leave this fool, and look out—the afternoon 's over or nearly so.

3 *Pol.* Where in this passport of Signor Luigi does the principal instruct you to watch him so narrowly? There? what 's there beside a simple signature? That English fool 's busy watching.

2 *Pol.* Flourish all round—"put all possible ob-

stacles in his way;" oblong dot at the end—"Detain him till further advices reach you;" scratch at bottom —"send him back on pretence of some informality in the above." Ink-spirt on right-hand side, (which is the case here)—"Arrest him at once," why and wherefore, I don't concern myself, but my instructions amount to this: if Signor Luigi leaves home to-night for Vienna, well and good—the passport deposed with us for our *visa* is really for his own use, they have misinformed the Office, and he means well; but, let him stay over to-night—there has been the pretence we suspect—the accounts of his corresponding and holding intelligence with the Carbonari are correct—we arrest him at once—to-morrow comes Venice—and presently, Spielberg. Bluphocks makes the signal sure enough!

III.—*Evening. Inside the Turret.* LUIGI *and his Mother entering.*

Mother. If there blew wind you'd hear a long sigh, easing
The utmost heaviness of music's heart.
Luigi. Here in the archway?
Mother. Oh no, no—in further.
Where the echo is made—on the ridge.
Luigi. Here surely then!
How plain the tap of my heel as I leaped up:
Aristogeiton! "ristogeiton"—plain
Was't not? Lucius Junius! The very ghost of a voice—

Whose flesh is caught and kept by those withered wall-
flowers,
Or by the elvish group with thin bleached hair
Who lean out of their topmost fortress—look
And listen, mountain men and women, to what
We say—chins under each grave earthly face:
Up and show faces all of you!—"All of you!"
That 's the king with the scarlet comb: come down!
—"Come down."

Mother. Do not kill that Man, my Luigi—do not
Go to the City! putting crime aside,
Half of these ills of Italy are feigned—
Your Pellicos and writers for effect
Write for effect.

Luigi. Hush! say A writes, and B.

Mother. These A's and B's write for effect I say.
Then evil is in its nature loud, while good
Is silent—you hear each petty injury—
None of his daily virtues; he is old,
Quiet, and kind, and densely stupid—why
Do A and B not kill him themselves?

Luigi. They teach
Others to kill him—me—and if I fail
Others to succeed; now if A tried and failed
I could not do that: mine 's the *lesser* task.
Mother, they visit night by night . . .

Mother. You Luigi?
Ah will you let me tell you what you are?

Luigi. Why not? Oh the one thing you fear to
hint
You may assure yourself I say and say
Often to myself; at times—nay, now—as now

We sit, I think my mind is touched—suspect
All is not sound—but is not knowing that
What constitutes one sane or otherwise?
I know I am thus—so all is right again!
I laugh at myself as thro' the town I walk
And see the world merry as if no Italy
Were suffering—then I ponder—I am rich,
Young, healthy, happy, why should this fact trouble
me . . .
More than it troubles these? But it does trouble me
No—trouble 's a bad word—for as I walk
There 's springing and melody and giddiness,
And old quaint turns and passages of my youth—
Dreams long forgotten, little in themselves—
Return to me—whatever may recreate me,
And earth seems in a truce with me, and heaven
Accords with me, all things suspend their strife,
The very cicales laugh "There goes he and there—
"Feast him, the time is short—he is on his way
"For the world's sake—feast him this once, our
friend!"
And in return for all this, I can trip
Cheerfully up the scaffold-steps: I go
This evening, mother.
Mother. But mistrust yourself—
Mistrust the judgment you pronounce on him.
Luigi. Oh, there I feel—am sure that I am right.
Mother. Mistrust your judgment then of the mere
means
Of this wild enterprise: say you are right,—
How should one in your state e'er bring to pass
What would require a cool head, a cold heart,

And a calm hand? you never will escape.
Luigi. Escape—to wish that even would spoil all!
The dying is best part of it—I have
Enjoyed these fifteen years of mine too much
To leave myself excuse for longer life—
Was not life pressed down, running o'er with joy,
That I might finish with it ere my fellows
Who sparelier feasted make a longer stay?
I was put at the board head, helped to all
At first: I rise up happy and content.
God must be glad one loves his world so much—
I can give news of earth to all the dead
Who ask me:—last year's sunsets and great stars
That had a right to come first and see ebb
The crimson wave that drifts the sun away—
Those crescent moons with notched and burning rims
That strengthened into sharp fire and there stood
Impatient of the azure—and that day
In March a double rainbow stopped the storm—
May's warm, slow, yellow moonlit summer nights—
Gone are they—but I have them in my soul!
Mother. (He will not go!)
Luigi. You smile at me—I know
Voluptuousness, grotesqueness, ghastliness,
Environ my devotedness as quaintly
As round about some antique altar wreathe
The rose festoons, goats' horns, and oxen's skulls.
Mother. See now—you reach the city—you must cross
His threshold—how?
Luigi. Oh, that's if we conspire!

Then come the pains in plenty you foresee
—Who guess not how the qualities required
For such an office—qualities I have—
Would little stead us otherwise employed,
Yet prove of rarest merit here—here only.
Every one knows for what his excellences
Will serve, but no one ever will consider
For what his worst defects might serve ; and yet
Have you not seen me range our coppice yonder
In search of a distorted ash ?—it happens
The wry spoilt branch 's a natural perfect bow :
Fancy the thrice sage, thrice precautioned man
Arriving at the city on my errand !
No, no—I have a handsome dress packed up—
White satin here to set off my black hair—
In I shall march—for you may watch your life out
Behind thick walls—binding friends to betray you ;
More than one man spoils every thing—March straight—
Only no clumsy knife to fumble for—
Take the great gate, and walk (not saunter) on
Thro' guards and guards——I have rehearsed it all
Inside the Turret here a hundred times—
Don't ask the way of whom you meet, observe,
But where they cluster thickliest is the door
Of doors : they'll let you pass . . they'll never blab
Each to the other, he knows not the favourite,
Whence he is bound and what 's his business now—
Walk in—straight up to him—you have no knife—
Be prompt, how should he scream ? Then, out with you !
Italy, Italy, my Italy !

You're free, you're free—Oh mother, I believed
They got about me—Andrea from his exile,
Pier from his dungeon, Gualtier from his grave!
Mother. Well you shall go. If patriotism were not
The easiest virtue for a selfish man
To acquire! he loves himself—and then, the world—
If he must love beyond, but nought between:
As a short-sighted man sees nought midway
His body and the sun above. But you
Are my adored Luigi—ever obedient
To my least wish, and running o'er with love—
I could not call you cruel or unkind!
Once more, your ground for killing him!—then go!
Luigi. Now do you ask me, or make sport of me?
How first the Austrians got these provinces—
(If that is all, I'll satisfy you soon)
. . . Never by warfare but by treaty, for
That treaty whereby . . .
Mother. Well?
Luigi. (Sure he 's arrived—
The tell-tale cuckoo—spring 's his confidant,
And he lets out her April purposes!)
Or . . better go at once to modern times—
He has . . they have . . in fact I understand
But can't re-state the matter; that 's my boast;
Others could reason it out to you, and prove
Things they have made me feel.
Mother. Why go to-night?
Morn 's for adventure. Jupiter is now
A morning-star . . . . I cannot hear you, Luigi!
Luigi. "I am the bright and morning-star," God saith—

And, "such an one I give the morning-star!"
The gift of the morning-star—have I God's gift
Of the morning-star?
Mother. Chiara will love to see
That Jupiter an evening-star next June.
Luigi. True, mother. Well for those who live June over.
Great noontides—thunder storms—all glaring pomps
Which triumph at the heels of June the God
Leading his revel thro' our leafy world.
Yes, Chiara will be here—
Mother. In June—remember
Yourself appointed that month for her coming—
Luigi. Was that low noise the echo?
Mother. The night-wind.
She must be grown—with her blue eyes upturned
As if life were one long and sweet surprise—
In June she comes.
Luigi. We are to see together
The Titian at Treviso—there again!

[*Without.*] A king lived long ago,
In the morning of the world,
When earth was nigher heaven than now:
And the king's locks curled
Disparting o'er a forehead full
As the milk-white space 'twixt horn and horn
Of some sacrificial bull—
Only calm as a babe new-born:
For he was got to a sleepy mood,
So safe from all decrepitude,
Age with its bane so sure gone by,

(The Gods so loved him while he dreamed,)
That, having lived thus long, there seemed
No need the king should ever die.

Luigi. No need that sort of king should ever die.

[*Without.*] Among the rocks his city was:
Before his palace, in the sun,
He sate to see his people pass,
And judge them every one
From its threshold of smooth stone.
They haled him many a valley-thief
Caught in the sheep-pens—robber-chief,
Swarthy and shameless—beggar-cheat—
Spy-prowler—or some pirate found
On the sea-sand left aground;
Sometimes there clung about his feet
With bleeding lip and burning cheek
A woman, bitterest wrong to speak
Of one with sullen, thickset brows:
Sometimes from out the prison-house
The angry priests a pale wretch brought,
Who through some chink had pushed and pressed,
Knees and elbows, belly and breast,
Worm-like into the temple,—caught
He was by the very God,
Who ever in the darkness strode
Backward and forward, keeping watch
O'er his brazen bowls, such rogues to catch:
These, all and every one,
The king judged, sitting in the sun.

Luigi. That king should still judge sitting in the sun.

[*Without.*] His councillors, on left and right,
Looked anxious up,—but no surprise
Disturbed the king's old smiling eyes,
Where the very blue had turned to white.
A python passed one day
The silent streets—until he came,
With forky tongue and eyes on flame,
Where the old king judged alway;
But when he saw the sweepy hair,
Girt with a crown of berries rare
The God will hardly give to wear
To the maiden who singeth, dancing bare
In the altar-smoke by the pine-torch lights,
At his wondrous forest rites,—
But which the God's self granted him
For setting free each felon limb
Because of earthly murder done
Faded till other hope was none;—
Seeing this, he did not dare,
Approach that threshold in the sun,
Assault the old king smiling there.

[PIPPA *passes.*

Luigi. Farewell, farewell — how could I stay?
Farewell!

Talk by the way in the mean time. Poor Girls *sitting on the steps of* MONSIGNOR'S *brother's house, close to the Duomo S. Maria.*

1 *Girl.* There goes a swallow to Venice—the stout sea-farer!
Let us all wish; you wish first.

2 *Girl.* I? This sunset
To finish.

3 *Girl.* That old . . . somebody I know,
To give me the same treat he gave last week—
Feeding me on his knee with fig-peckers,
Lampreys, and red Breganze-wine, and mumbling
The while some folly about how well I fare—
Since had he not himself been late this morning
Detained at—never mind where—had he not . .
Eh, baggage, had I not!—

2 *Girl* How she can lie!

3 *Girl.* Look there—by the nails—

2 *Girl.* What makes your fingers red?

3 *Girl.* Dipping them into wine to write bad words with
On the bright table—how he laughed!

1 *Girl.* My turn:
Spring 's come and summer 's coming: I would wear
A long loose gown—down to the feet and hands—
With plaits here, close about the throat, all day:
And all night lie, the cool long nights, in bed—
And have new milk to drink—apples to eat,
Deuzans and junetings, leather-coats . . ah, I should say
This is away in the fields—miles!

3 *Girl.* Say at once
You'd be at home—she'd always be at home!
Now comes the story of the farm among
The cherry orchards, and how April snowed
White blossoms on her as she ran: why fool,
They've rubbed the chalk-mark out how tall you were,
Twisted your starling's neck, broken his cage,

Made a dunghill of your garden—
1 *Girl.* They destroy
My garden since I left them? well—perhaps!
I would have done so—so I hope they have!
A fig-tree curled out of our cottage wall—
They called it mine, I have forgotten why,
It must have been there long ere I was born,
Criq—criq—I think I hear the wasps o'erhead
Pricking the papers strung to flutter there
And keep off birds in fruit-time—coarse long papers
And the wasps eat them, prick them through and through.
3 *Girl.* How her mouth twitches! where was I before
She broke in with her wishes and long gowns
And wasps—would I be such a fool!—Oh, here!
This is my way—I answer every one
Who asks me why I make so much of him—
(Say, you love him—he'll not be gulled, he'll say)
"He that seduced me when I was a girl
Thus high—had eyes like yours, or hair like yours,
Brown, red, white,"—as the case may be—that pleases!
(See how that beetle burnishes in the path—
There sparkles he along the dust—and there—
Your journey to that maize tuft 's spoilt at least!
1 *Girl.* When I was young they said if you killed one
Of those sunshiny beetles, that his friend
Up there would shine no more that day or next.
2 *Girl.* When you were young? Nor are you young, that 's true!
How your plump arms, that were, have dropped away!

Why I can span them! Cecco beats you still?
No matter so you keep your curious hair.
I wish they'd find a way to dye our hair
Your colour—any lighter tint, indeed,
Than black—the men say they are sick of black,
Black eyes, black hair!

3 *Girl.* Sick of yours, like enough,
Do you pretend you ever tasted lampreys
And ortolans? Giovita, of the palace,
Engaged (but there 's no trusting him) to slice me
Polenta with a knife that had cut up
An ortolan.

2 *Girl.* Why—there! is not that Pippa
We are to talk to, under the window, quick
Where the lights are?

1 *Girl.* No—or she would sing
—For the Intendant said . . .

3 *Girl.* Oh, you sing first—
Then, if she listens and comes close . . I'll tell you,
Sing that song the young English noble made,
Who took you for the purest of the pure
And meant to leave the world for you—what fun!

2 *Girl.* [*Sings.*]

You'll love me yet!—and I can tarry
Your love's protracted growing:
June reared that bunch of flowers you carry
From seeds of April's sowing.

I plant a heartfull now—some seed
At least is sure to strike
And yield—what you'll not care, indeed,
To pluck, but, may be like

To look upon . . my whole remains,
A grave's one violet :
Your look?—that pays a thousand pains.
What's death?—You'll love me yet!

3 *Girl.* [*To* Pippa, *who approaches.*] Oh, you may come closer—we shall not eat you!

IV.—*Night. The Palace by the Duomo.* Monsignor, *dismissing his* Attendants.

Mon. Thanks, friends, many thanks. I desire life now chiefly that I may recompense every one of you. Most I know something of already. *Benedicto benedicatur* . . ugh . . ugh! Where was I? Oh, as you were remarking, Ugo, the weather is mild, very unlike winter-weather,—but I am a Sicilian, you know, and shiver in your Julys here: To be sure, when 'twas full summer at Messina, as we priests used to cross in procession the great square on Assumption Day, you might see our thickest yellow tapers twist suddenly in two, each like a falling star, or sink down on themselves in a gore of wax. But go, my friends, but go! [*To the* Intendant] Not you, Ugo! [*The others leave the apartment, where a table with refreshments is prepared.*] I have long wanted to converse with you, Ugo!

Inten. Uguccio—

Mon. . . 'guccio Stefani, man! of Ascoli, Fermo, and Fossombruno:—what I do need instructing about

are these accounts of your administration of my poor brother's affairs. Ugh! I shall never get through a third part of your accounts: take some of these dainties before we attempt it, however: are you bashful to that degree? For me, a crust and water suffice.

Inten. Do you choose this especial night to question me?

Mon. This night, Ugo. You have managed my late brother's affairs since the death of our elder brother—fourteen years and a month, all but three days. The 3rd of December, I find him . . .

Inten. If you have so intimate an acquaintance with your brother's affairs, you will be tender of turning so far back—they will hardly bear looking into so far back.

Mon. Ay, ay, ugh, ugh,—nothing but disappointments here below! I remark a considerable payment made to yourself on this 3rd of December. Talk of disappointments! There was a young fellow here, Jules, a foreign sculptor, I did my utmost to advance, that the church might be a gainer by us both: he was going on hopefully enough, and of a sudden he notifies to me some marvellous change that has happened in his notions of art; here's his letter,—"He never had a clearly conceived Ideal within his brain till to-day. Yet since his hand could manage a chisel he has practised expressing other men's Ideals —and in the very perfection he has attained to he foresees an ultimate failure—his unconscious hand will pursue its prescribed course of old years, and will reproduce with a fatal expertness the ancient types, let the novel one appear never so palpably to his spirit:

there is but one method of escape—confiding the virgin type to as chaste a hand, he will paint, not carve, its characteristics,"—strike out, I dare say, a school like Correggio: how think you, Ugo?

Inten. Is Correggio a painter?

Mon. Foolish Jules! and yet, after all, why foolish He may—probably will, fail egregiously; but if there should arise a new painter, will it not be in some such way—a poet, now, or a musician, spirits who have conceived and perfected an Ideal through some other channel, transferring it to this, and escaping our conventional roads by pure ignorance of them, eh, Ugo? If you have no appetite, talk at least, Ugo!

Inten. Sir, I can submit no longer to this course of yours: first, you select the group of which I formed one,—next you thin it gradually,—always retaining me with your smile,—and so do you proceed till you have fairly got me alone with you between four stone walls: and now then? Let this farce, this chatter end now—what is it you want with me?

Mon. Ugo . . .

Inten. From the instant you arrived I felt your smile on me as you questioned me about this and the other article in those papers—why, your brother should have given me this manor, that liberty,—and your nod at the end meant,—what?

Mon. Possibly that I wished for no loud talk here—if once you set me coughing, Ugo!

Inten. I have your brother's hand and seal to all I possess: now ask me what for! what service I did him—ask me!

Mon. I had better not—I should rip up old dis-

graces—let out my poor brother's weaknesses. By the way, Maffeo of Forli, (which, I forgot to observe, is your true name) was the interdict taken off you for robbing that church at Cesena?

Inten. No, nor needs be—for when I murdered your brother's friend, Pasquale, for him . . .

Mon. Ah, he employed you in that matter, did he? Well, I must let you keep, as you say, this manor and that liberty, for fear the world should find out my relations were of so indifferent a stamp: Maffeo, my family is the oldest in Messina, and century after century have my progenitors gone on polluting themselves with every wickedness under Heaven: my own father . . . rest his soul!—I have, I know, a chapel to support that it may: my dear two dead brothers were,—what you know tolerably well: I, the youngest, might have rivalled them in vice, if not in wealth, but from my boyhood I came out from among them, and so am not partaker of their plagues. My glory springs from another source, or if from this, by contrast only,—for I, the bishop, am the brother of your employers, Ugo. I hope to repair some of their wrong, however; so far as my brother's ill-gotten treasure reverts to me, I can stop the consequences of his crime, and not one *soldo* shall escape me. Maffeo, the sword we quiet men spurn away, you shrewd knaves pick up and commit murders with; what opportunities the virtuous forego, the villanous seize. Because, to pleasure myself, apart from other considerations, my food would be millet-cake, my dress sackcloth, and my couch straw, am I therefore to let the off-scouring of the earth seduce the ignorant by appropriating a pomp these

will be sure to think lessens the abominations so unaccountably and exclusively associated with it? Must I let manors and liberties go to you, a murderer and thief, that you may beget by means of them other murderers and thieves? No . . . if my cough would but allow me to speak!

Inten. What am I to expect? you are going to punish me?

Mon. Must punish you, Maffeo. I cannot afford to cast away a chance. I have whole centuries of sin to redeem, and only a month or two of life to do it in! How should I dare to say . . .

Inten. "Forgive us our trespasses."

Mon. My friend, it is because I avow myself a very worm, sinful beyond measure, that I reject a line of conduct you would applaud, perhaps: shall I proceed, as it were, a-pardoning?—I?—who have no symptom of reason to assume that aught less than my strenuousest efforts will keep myself out of mortal sin, much less, keep others out. No—I do trespass, but will not double that by allowing you to trespass.

Inten. And suppose the manors are not your brother's to give, or yours to take? Oh, you are hasty enough just now!

Mon. 1, 2—No. 3!—ay, can you read the substance of a letter, No. 3, I have received from Rome? It is on the ground I there mention of the suspicion I have that a certain child of my late elder brother, who would have succeeded to his estates, was murdered in infancy by you, Maffeo, at the instigation of my late brother—that the pontiff enjoins on me not merely the bringing that Maffeo to condign punishment, but

the taking all pains, as guardian of that infant's heritage for the church, to recover it parcel by parcel, howsoever, whensoever, and wheresoever. While you are now gnawing those fingers, the police are engaged in sealing up your papers, Maffeo, and the mere raising my voice brings my people from the next room to dispose of yourself. But I want you to confess quietly, and save me raising my voice. Why, man, do I not know the old story? The heir between the succeeding heir, and that heir's ruffianly instrument, and their complot's effect, and the life of fear and bribes, and ominous smiling silence? Did you throttle or stab my brother's infant? Come, now!

Inten. So old a story, and tell it no better? When did such an instrument ever produce such an effect? Either the child smiles in his face, or, most likely, he is not fool enough to put himself in the employer's power so thoroughly—the child is always ready to produce—as you say—howsoever, wheresoever, and whensoever.

Mon. Liar!

Inten. Strike me? Ah, so might a father chastise! I shall sleep soundly to-night at least, though the gallows await me to-morrow; for what a life did I lead? Carlo of Cesena reminds me of his connivance every time I pay his annuity (which happens commonly thrice a year). If I remonstrate, he will confess all to the good bishop—you!

Mon. I see thro' the trick, caitiff! I would you spoke truth for once; all shall be sifted, however—seven times sifted.

Inten. And how my absurd riches encumbered me!

I dared not lay claim to above half my possessions. Let me but once unbosom myself, glorify Heaven, and die!

Sir, you are no brutal, dastardly idiot like your brother I frightened to death . . . let us understand one another. Sir, I will make away with her for you —the girl—here close at hand; not the stupid obvious kind of killing; do not speak—know nothing of her or me. I see her every day—saw her this morning—of course there is no killing; but at Rome the courtesans perish off every three years, and I can entice her thither—have, indeed, begun operations already—there's a certain lusty, blue-eyed, florid-complexioned, English knave I employ occasionally.—You assent, I perceive—no, that's not it—assent I do not say—but you will let me convert my present havings and holdings into cash, and give time to cross the Alps? 'Tis but a little black-eyed, pretty singing Felippa, gay silk-winding girl. I have kept her out of harm's way up to this present; for I always intended to make your life a plague to you with her! 'Tis as well settled once and forever: some women I have procured will pass Bluphocks, my handsome scoundrel, off for somebody, and once Pippa entangled!—you conceive?

Mon. Why, if she sings, one might . . .

[*Without.*] Over-head the tree-tops meet—
Flowers and grass spring 'neath one's feet—
What are the voices of birds
—Ay, and beasts, too—but words—our words,
Only so much more sweet?
That knowledge with my life begun!

But I had so near made out the sun—
Could count your stars, the Seven and One!
Like the fingers of my hand—
Nay, could all but understand
How and wherefore the moon ranges—
And just when out of her soft fifty changes
No unfamiliar face might overlook me—
Suddenly God took me. [PIPPA *passes.*

Mon. [*Springing up.*] My people—one and all—all—within there! Gag this villain—tie him hand and foot: he dares—I know not half he dares—but remove him—quick! *Miserere mei, Domine!* quick, I say!

PIPPA'S *Chamber again. She enters it.*

The bee with his comb,
The mouse at her dray,
The grub in its tomb
Wile winter away;
But the fire-fly and hedge-shrew and lob-worm, I pray,
Where be they?
Ha, ha, thanks my Zanze—
"Feed on lampreys, quaff Breganze"—
The summer of life's so easy to spend!
But winter hastens at summer's end,
And fire-fly, hedge-shrew, lob-worm, pray,
Where be they?
No bidding you then to . . what did Zanze say?
"Pare your nails pearlwise, get your small feet shoes
"More like . . (what said she?)—and less like canoes—"

Pert as a sparrow . . . would I be those pert
Impudent staring wretches! it had done me,
However, surely no such mighty hurt
To learn his name who passed that jest upon me.—
No foreigner, that I can recollect,
Came, as she says, a month since to inspect
Our silk-mills—none with blue eyes and thick rings
Of English-coloured hair, at all events.
Well—if old Luca keeps his good intents
We shall do better—see what next year brings—
I may buy shoes, my Zanze, not appear
So destitute, perhaps, next year!
Bluf—something—I had caught the uncouth name
But for Monsignor's people's sudden clatter
Above us—bound to spoil such idle chatter,
The pious man, the man devoid of blame,
The . . . ah, but—ah, but, all the same
No mere mortal has a right
To carry that exalted air;
Best people are not angels quite—
While—not worst people's doings scare
The devils; so there 's that regard to spare!
Mere counsel to myself, mind! for
I have just been Monsignor!
And I was you too, mother,
And you too, Luigi!—how that Luigi started
Out of the Turret—doubtlessly departed
On some love-errand or another—
And I was Jules the sculptor's bride,
And I was Ottima beside,
And now what am I?—tired of fooling!
Day for folly, night for schooling—

New year's day is over—over!
Even my lily 's asleep, I vow:
Wake up—here 's a friend I pluckt you.
See—call this a heart's-ease now!
Something rare, let me instruct you,
Is this—with petals triply swollen,
Three times spotted, thrice the pollen,
While the leaves and parts that witness
The old proportions and their fitness
Here remain, unchanged unmoved now—
Call this pampered thing improved now!
Suppose there 's a king of the flowers
And a girl-show held in his bowers—
" Look ye, buds, this growth of ours,"
Says he, "Zanze from the Brenta,
I have made her gorge polenta
Till both cheeks are near as bouncing
As her . . . name there 's no pronouncing!
See this heightened colour too—
For she swilled Breganze wine
Till her nose turned deep carmine—
'Twas but white when wild she grew!
And only by this Zanze's eyes
Of which we could not change the size,
The magnitude of what 's achieved
Elsewhere may be perceived!"

Oh what a drear, dark close to my poor day!
How could that red sun drop in that black cloud!
Ah, Pippa, morning's rule is moved away,
Dispensed with, never more to be allowed.
Day's turn 's over—now 's the night's—

Oh Lark be day's apostle
To mavis, merle and throstle,
Bid them their betters jostle
From day and its delights!
But at night, brother Howlet, over the woods
Toll the world to thy chantry—
Sing to the bats' sleek sisterhoods
Full complines with galantry—
Then, owls and bats, cowls and twats,
Monks and nuns, in a cloister's moods,
Adjourn to the oak-stump pantry!
[*After she has begun to undress herself.*
Now one thing I should like to really know:
How near I ever might approach all these
I only fancied being this long day—
. . . Approach, I mean, so as to touch them—so
As to . . in some way . . move them—if you please,
Do good or evil to them some slight way.
For instance, if I wind
Silk to-morrow, silk may bind [*Sitting on the bedside.*
And broider Ottima's cloak's hem—
Ah, me and my important passing them
This morning's hymn half promised when I rose!
True in some sense or other, I suppose.
[*As she lies down.*
God bless me tho' I cannot pray to-night.
No doubt, some way or other, hymns say right.
All service is the same with God—
Whose puppets, best and worst,
Are we. . . . . [*She sleeps.*

KING VICTOR AND KING CHARLES.

PERSONS.

VICTOR AMADEUS, First King of Sardinia.
CHARLES EMMANUEL, his Son, Prince of Piedmont.
POLYXENA, Wife of Charles.
D'ORMEA, Minister.

SCENE—The Council Chamber of Rivoli Palace, near Turin, communicating with a Hall at the back, an Apartment to the left and another to the right of the stage.

TIME, 1730-1.

King Victor and King Charles.

FIRST YEAR, 1730.

KING VICTOR. PART I.

CHARLES, POLYXENA.

Charles.

YOU think so? Well, I do not.
Pol. My beloved,
All must clear up—we shall be happy yet:
This cannot last for ever . . oh, may change
To-day, or any day!
Cha. —May change? Ah yes—
May change!
Pol. Endure it then.
Cha. No doubt a life
Like this drags on, now better and now worse;
My father may . . . may take to loving me;
And he may take, too, D'Ormea closer yet
To counsel him;—may even cast off her
—That bad Sebastian; but he also may
. . Or no, Polyxena, my only friend,
He may not force you from me?
Pol. Now, force me
From you!—me, close by you as if there gloomed

No D'Ormeas, no Sebastians on our path—
At Rivoli or Turin, still at hand,
Arch-counsellor, prime confidant . . . force me!
Cha. Because I felt as sure, as I feel sure
We clasp hands now, of being happy once.
Young was I, quite neglected, nor concerned
By the world's business that engrossed so much
My father and my brother: if I peered
From out my privacy,—amid the crash
And blaze of nations, domineered those two;
'Twas war, peace—France our foe, now—England's friend—
In love with Spain—at feud with Austria!—Well—
I wondered—laughed a moment's laugh for pride
In the chivalrous couple—then let drop
My curtain—"I am out of it," I said—
When . . .
Pol. You have told me, Charles.
Cha. Polyxena—
When suddenly,—a warm March day, just that
Sunshine the cottager's child basks in—he
Takes off his bonnet as he ceases work
To catch the more of it—and it must fall
Heavily on my brother . . . had you seen
Philip—the lion-featured!—not like me!
Pol. I know—
Cha. And Philip's mouth yet fast to mine,
His dead cheek on my cheek, his arm still round
My neck,—they bade me rise, "for I was heir
To the Duke," they said, "the right hand of the Duke;"
Till then he was my father, not the Duke!
So . . let me finish . . the whole intricate

World's-business their dead boy was born to, I
Must conquer,—ay, the brilliant thing he was,
I, of a sudden, must be : my faults, my follies,
—All bitter truths were told me, all at once
To end the sooner. What I simply styled
Their overlooking me, had been contempt :
How should the Duke employ himself, forsooth,
With such an one while lordly Philip rode
By him their Turin through ? But he was punished,
And must put up with—me ! 'Twas sad enough
To learn my future portion and submit—
And then the wear and worry, blame on blame !
—For, spring-sounds in my ears, spring-smells about,
How could I but grow dizzy in their pent
Dim palace-rooms at first ? My mother's look
As they discussed my insignificance—
(She and my father and I sitting by,)—
I bore :—I knew how brave a son they missed :
Philip had gaily passed state-papers o'er
While Charles was spelling at them painfully !
But Victor was my father spite of that.
Duke Victor's entire life has been, I said,
Innumerable efforts to one end ;
And, on the point now of that end's success,
Our Ducal turning to a Kingly crown,
Where's time to be reminded 'tis his child
He spurns ? And so I suffered . . hardly suffered,
Since I had you at length !

Pol. —To serve in place
Of monarch, minister and mistress, Charles.

Cha. But, once that crown obtained, then was't not like

Our lot would alter?—When he rests, takes breath,
Glances around, and sees who 's left to love—
Now that my mother 's dead, sees I am left—
Was it not like he'd love me at the last?
Well: Savoy turns Sardinia—the Duke 's King!
Could I—precisely then—could you expect
His harshness to redouble? These few months
Have been . . . have been . . Polyxena, do you
And God conduct me or I lose myself!
What would he have? What is 't they want with me?
Him with this mistress and this minister,
—You see me and you hear him; judge us both!
Pronounce what I should do, Polyxena!

Pol. Endure, endure, beloved! say you not
That he 's your Father? All 's so incident
To novel sway! Beside, our life must change:
Or you'll acquire his kingcraft, or he'll learn
His own 's a sorry way of teaching it.
I bear this—not that there 's so much to bear—

Cha. You bear it? Don't I know that you, tho' bound
To silence for my sake, are perishing
Piecemeal beside me? and how otherwise?
—When every creephole from the hideous Court
Is stopt; the Minister to dog me, here—
The Mistress posted to entrap you there!
And thus shall we grow old in such a life—
Not careless,—never estranged,—but old: to alter
Our life, there is so much to alter!

Pol. Come—
Is it agreed that we forego complaints
Even at Turin, yet complain we here

At Rivoli? 'Twere wiser you announced
Our presence to the King—What 's now a-foot,
I wonder?—Not that any more 's to dread
Than every day 's embarrassment—but guess
For me why train so fast succeeded train
On the high-road, each gayer still than each;
I noticed your Archbishop's pursuivant,
The sable cloak and silver cross; such pomp
Bodes . . what now, Charles? Can you conceive?
Cha. Not I.
Pol. A matter of some moment—
Cha. There 's our life!
Which of the group of loiterers that stared
From the lime-avenue divines that I—
About to figure presently, he thinks,
In face of all assembled—am the one
Who knows precisely least about it?
Pol. Tush!
D'Ormea's contrivance!
Cha. Ay—how otherwise
Should the young Prince serve for the old King's foil?
—So that the simplest courtier may remark
'Twere idle raising parties for a Prince
Content to linger D'Ormea's laughing-stock!
Something, 'tis like, about that weary business
[*Pointing to papers he has laid down, and which* Polyxena *examines.*
—Not that I comprehend three words, of course,
After all last night's study.
Pol. The faint heart!
Why, as we rode and you rehearsed just now

Its substance . . (that's the folded speech I mean,
Concerning the Reduction of the Fiefs . .)
—What would you have?—I fancied while you spoke
Some tones were just your father's.

Cha. Flattery!

Pol. I fancied so:—and here lurks, sure enough,
My note upon the Spanish Claims! you've mastered
The fief-speech thoroughly—this other, mind,
Is an opinion you deliver,—stay,
Best read it slowly over once to me;
Read—there's bare time; you read it firmly—loud
—Rather loud—looking in his face,—don't sink
Your eye once—ay, thus. "If Spain claims . . ."
begin
—Just as you look at me!

Cha. At you! Oh, truly,
You have I seen, say, marshalling your troops—
Dismissing councils—or, through doors ajar,
Head sunk on hand, devoured by slow chagrins
—Then radiant, for a crown had all at once
Seemed possible again! I can behold
Him, whose least whisper ties my spirit fast,
In this sweet brow nought could divert me from,
Save objects like Sebastian's shameless lip,
Or, worse, the clipt grey hair and dead white face,
And dwindling eye as if it ached with guile,
Which D'Ormea wears . . .

[*As he kisses her, enter from the* KING'S *apartment* D'ORMEA.

. . I said he would divert
My kisses from your brow!

D'O. [*Aside.*] Here! So King Victor

Spoke truth for once, and who 's ordained but I
To make that memorable? Both in call,
As he declared! Were 't better gnash the teeth
Or laugh outright now?

Cha. [*To* Polyxena.] What 's his visit for?

D'O. [*Aside.*] I question if they'll even speak to me.

Pol. [*To* Charles.] Face D'Ormea, he'll suppose you fear him, else.

[*Aloud.*] The Marquis bears the King's command, no doubt.

D'O. [*Aside.*] Precisely!—if I threatened him, perhaps?
Well, this at least is punishment enough!
Men used to promise punishment would come.

Cha. Deliver the King's message, Marquis!

D'O. [*Aside.*] Ah—
So anxious for his fate? [*Aloud.*] A word, my Prince,
Before you see your father—just one word
Of counsel!

Cha. Oh, your counsel certainly—
Polyxena, the Marquis counsels us!
Well, sir? Be brief, however!

D'O. What? you know
As much as I?—preceded me, most like,
In knowledge? So! 'Tis in his eye, beside—
His voice—he knows it and his heart 's on flame
Already! You surmise why you, myself,
Del Borgo, Spava, fifty nobles more,
Are summoned thus?

Cha. Is the Prince used to know
At any time the pleasure of the King

Before his minister?—Polyxena,
Stay here till I conclude my task—I feel
Your presence . . (smile not) . . thro' the walls, and take
Fresh heart. The King 's within that chamber?

D'O. [*Passing the table whereon a paper lies, exclaims, as he glances at it,*] Spain!

Pol. [*Aside to* CHARLES.] Tarry awhile: what ails the minister?

D'O. Madam, I do not often trouble you.
The Prince loathes and you loathe me—let that pass;
But since it touches him and you, not me,
Bid the Prince listen!

Pol. [*To* CHARLES.] Surely you will listen!
—Deceit?—Those fingers crumpling up his vest?

Cha. Deceitful to the very fingers' ends!

D'O. [*Who has approached them, overlooks the other paper* CHARLES *continues to hold.*]
My project for the Fiefs! As I supposed!
Sir, I must give you light upon those measures
—For this is mine, and that I spied of Spain,
Mine too!

Cha. Release me! Do you gloze on me
Who bear in the world's face (that is, the world
You've made for me at Turin) your contempt?
—Your measures?—When was any hateful task
Not D'Ormea's imposition? Leave my robe!
What post can I bestow, what grant concede?
Or do you take me for the King?

D'O. Not I!
Not yet for King,—not for as yet, thank God,
One who in . . shall I say a year—a month?

Ay !—shall be wretcheder than e'er was slave
In his Sardinia,—Europe's spectacle
And the world's bye-word ! What ? The Prince aggrieved
That I've excluded him our counsels ? Here
[*Touching the paper in* CHARLES'S *hand.*
Accept a method of extorting gold
From Savoy's nobles, who must wring its worth
In silver first from tillers of the soil,
Whose hinds again have to contribute brass
To make up the amount—there's counsel, sir !
My counsel one year old ; and the fruit, this—
Savoy 's become a mass of misery
And wrath, which one man has to meet—the King :
You're not the King ! Another counsel, sir !
Spain entertains a project (here it lies)
Which guessed makes Austria offer that same King
Thus much to baffle Spain ; he promises ;
Then comes Spain, breathless lest she be forestalled,
Her offer follows, and he promises . . .

Cha. Promises, sir, when he before agreed
To Austria's offer ?

D'O. That 's a counsel, Prince !
But, past our foresight Spain and Austria, choosing
To make their quarrel up between themselves
Without the intervention of a friend,
Produce both treaties, and both promises . . .

Cha. How ?

D'O. Prince, a counsel !—And the fruit of that ?
Both parties covenant afresh to fall
Together on their friend, blot out his name,
Abolish him from Europe. So take note,

Here 's Austria and here 's Spain to fight against,
And what sustains the King but Savoy here,
A miserable people mad with wrongs ?
You're not the King !
Cha. Polyxena, you said
All would clear up—all does clear up to me !
D'O. Clears up ? 'Tis no such thing to envy, then ?
You see the King's state in its length and breadth ?
You blame me now for keeping you aloof
From counsels and the fruit of counsels ?—Wait
'Till I've explained this morning's business !
Cha. [*Aside.*] No—
Stoop to my father, yes,—to D'Ormea, no !
The King's son, not to the King's counsellor !
I will do something,—but at least retain
The credit of my deed ! [*Aloud.*] Then, D'Ormea, this
You now expressly come to tell me ?
D'O. This
To tell ! You apprehend me ?
Cha. Perfectly.
And further, D'Ormea, you have shown yourself
For the first time these many weeks and months
Disposed to do my bidding ?
D'O. From the heart !
Cha. Acquaint my father, first, I wait his pleasure :
Next . . . or I'll tell you at a fitter time.
Acquaint the King !
D'O. [*Aside.*] If I 'scape Victor yet !
First, to prevent this stroke at me—if not,
Then to avenge it ! [*To* CHARLES.] Gracious sir, I go.
[*Exit.*

Cha. God, I forbore! Which more offends—that man
Or that man's master? Is it come to this?
Have they supposed (the sharpest insult yet!)
I needed e'en his intervention? No!
No—dull am I, conceded,—but so dull,
Scarcely! Their step decides me.
Pol. How decides?
Cha. You would be free from D'Ormea's eye and hers?
—Could fly the court with me and live content?
So—this it is for which the knights assemble!
The whispers and the closeting of late,
The savageness and insolence of old,
—For this!
Pol. What mean you?
Cha. How? you fail to catch
Their clever plot? I missed it—but could you?
These last two months of care to inculcate
How dull I am,—with D'Ormea's present visit
To prove that, being dull, I might be worse
Were I a king—as wretched as now dull—
You recognise in it no winding-up
Of a long plot?
Pol. Why should there be a plot?
Cha. The crown 's secure now; I should shame the crown—
An old complaint: the point is, how to save
My place for his Sebastian's child.
Pol. In truth?
Cha. They dare not quite dethrone Sardinia's Prince:
But they may descant on my dulness till

They sting me into even praying them
For leave to hide my head, resign my state,
And end the coil. Not see that? In a word,
They'd have me tender them myself my rights
As one incapable:—some cause for that,
Since I delayed thus long to see their drift!
I shall apprise the King he may resume
My rights this moment.
Pol. Pause—I dare not think
So ill of Victor.
Cha. Think no ill of him!
Pol. —Nor think him, then, so shallow as to suffer
His purpose be divined thus easily.
And yet—you are the last of a great line;
There 's a great heritage at stake; new days
Seemed to await this newest of the realms
Of Europe:—Charles, you must withstand this!
Cha. Ah—
You dare not then renounce the splendid court
For one whom all the world despises? Speak!
Pol. My gentle husband, speak I will, and truth.
Were this as you believe, and I once sure
Your duty lay in so renouncing rule,
I could . . could? Oh, what happiness it were
To live, my Charles, and die alone with you!
Cha. I grieve I asked you. To the Presence, then!
D'Ormea acquaints the King by this, no doubt,
He fears I am too simple for mere hints,
And that no less will serve than Victor's mouth
Teaching me in full council what I am.
—I have not breathed, I think, these many years!
Pol. Why—it may be!—if he desires to wed

That woman and legitimate her child—
Cha. You see as much? Oh, let his will have way!
You'll not repent confiding in me, love?
There 's many a brighter spot in Piedmont far
Than Rivoli. I'll seek him—or, suppose
You hear first how I mean to speak my mind?
—Loudly and firmly both, this time, be sure!
I yet may see your Rhine-land—who can tell?
Once away, ever then away! I breathe.
Pol. And I too breathe!
Cha. Come, my Polyxena!
[*Exeunt.*

KING VICTOR. PART II.

Enter KING VICTOR, *bearing the regalia on a cushion from his apartment. He calls loudly.*

D'Ormea!—for patience fails me, treading thus
Among the trains that I have laid,—my knights,
My son,—and D'Ormea, where? Of this, one touch—
[*Laying down the crown.*
This fireball to these mute, black, cold trains—then!
Outbreak enough!
[*Contemplating it.*] To lose all, after all!
This—glancing o'er my house for ages—shaped,
Brave meteor, like the Crown of Cyprus now—
Jerusalem, Spain, England—every change
The braver,—and when I have clutched a prize
My ancestry died wan with watching for,
To lose it!—by a slip—a fault—a trick
Learnt to advantage once, and not unlearnt
When past the use,—"just this once more" (I thought)

"Use it with Spain and Austria happily,
And then away with trick!"—An oversight
I'd have repaired thrice over any time
These fifty years must happen now! There 's peace
At length; and I, to make of peace the most,
Ventured my project on our people here,
As needing not their help—which Europe knows,
And means, cold-blooded, to dispose herself
(Apart the plausibilities of war)
To crush the new-made King—who ne'er till now
Feared her. As Duke, I lost each foot of earth
And laughed at her: my name was left, my sword
Left, all was left! But she can take, she knows,
This crown herself conceded . . .
That 's to try,
Kind Europe! My career 's not closed as yet!
This boy was ever subject to my will—
Timid and tame—the fitter! D'Ormea, too—
What if the sovereign 's also rid of thee
His prime of parasites?—Yet I delay!
D'Ormea!

[*As D'Ormea enters, the King seats himself.*

My son the Prince—attends he?

D'O. Sire,
He does attend. The crown prepared!—it seems
That you persist in your resolve.

Vic. Who 's come?
The chancellor and the chamberlain? My knights?

D'O. The whole Annunziata.—If, my liege,
Your fortunes had not tottered worse than now . . .

Vic. Del Borgo has drawn up the schedules? mine—
My son's too? Excellent. Only, beware

Of the least blunder, or but fools we look.
First, you read the Annulment of the Oaths;
Del Borgo follows . . no, the Prince shall sign;
Then let Del Borgo read the Instrument—
On which, I enter.—

D'O. Sire, this may be truth:
You, sire, may do as you affect—may break
Your engine, me, to pieces: try at least
If not a spring remains worth saving! Bid
Me counsel as I've counselled many times!
What if the Spaniard and the Austrian threat?
There 's England, Holland, Venice—which ally
Select you?

Vic. Aha! Come, my D'Ormea,—"truth"
Was on your lip a minute since. Allies?
I've broken faith with Venice, Holland, England.
—As who knows if not you?

D'O. . . . But not with me
Broke faith—with one ally, your best, broke faith.

Vic. When first I stumbled on you, Marquis—(at
Mondovi 'twas,—a little lawyer's clerk . . .)

D'O. . . . Therefore your soul's ally!—who brought you through
Your quarrel with the Pope at pains enough—
Who 've simply echoed you in these affairs—
On whom you cannot therefore visit these
Affairs' ill fortune—whom you'll trust to guide
You safe (yes, on my soul) in these affairs!

Vic. I was about to notice, had you not
Prevented me, that since Mondovi kept
With its chicane my D'Ormea's satchel stuffed,
And D'Ormea's self sufficiently recluse,

He missed a sight,—my naval armament
When I burnt Toulon. How the skiff exults
Upon the galliot's wave!—rises its height,
O'ertops it even; but the great wave bursts—
And hell-deep in the horrible profound
Buries itself the galliot:—shall the skiff
Think to escape the sea's black trough in turn?
Apply this: you have been my minister
—Next me—above me possibly;—sad post,
Huge care, abundant lack of peace of mind;
Who would desiderate the eminence?
You gave your soul to get it—you'd yet give
Your soul to keep it, as I mean you shall,
My D'Ormea! What if the wave ebbed with me?
Whereas it cants you to another's crest—
I toss you to my son; ride out your ride!

D'O. Ah, you so much despise me then?

Vic. You, D'Ormea?
Nowise: and I'll inform you why. A king
Must in his time have many ministers,
And I've been rash enough to part with mine
When I thought proper. Of the tribe, not one
(. . Or wait, did Pianezze? . . ah, just the same!)
Not one of them, ere his remonstrance reached
The length of yours, but has assured me (commonly
Standing much as you stand,—or nearer, say,
The door to make his exit on his speech)
—"I should repent of what I did:" now, D'Ormea,
(Be candid—you approached it when I bade you
Prepare the schedules! But you stopped in time)
—You have not so assured me: how should I
Despise you, then?

Enter CHARLES.

Vic. [*Changing his tone.*] Are you instructed? Do
My order point by point! About it, sir!
D'O. You so despise me? [*Aside.*] One last stay
remains—
The boy's discretion there. [*To* CHARLES.]
For your sake, Prince,
I pleaded—wholly in your interest—
To save you from this fate!
Cha. [*Aside.*] Must I be told
The Prince was supplicated for—by him?
Vic. [*To* D'ORMEA.] Apprise Del Borgo, Spava, and
the rest,
Our son attends them: then return.
D'O. One word . . .
Cha. [*Aside.*] A moment's pause and they would
drive me hence,
I do believe!
D'O. [*Aside.*] Let but the boy be firm!
Vic. You disobey?
Cha. [*To* D'ORMEA.] You do not disobey
Me, D'Ormea? Did you promise that or no?
D'O. Sir, I am yours—what would you? Yours
am I.
Cha. When I have said what I shall say, 'tis like
Your face will ne'er again disgust me. Go!
Through you, as through a breast of glass, I see.
And for your conduct, from my youth till now,
Take my contempt! You might have spared me much,
Secured me somewhat, nor so harmed yourself—
That 's over now. Go—ne'er to come again!

D'O. As son, the father—father as, the son !
My wits ! My wits ! [*Exit.*
Vic. [*Seated.*] And you, what meant you, pray,
By speaking thus to D'Ormea ?
Cha. Let us not
Weary ourselves with D'Ormea ! Those few words
Have half unsettled what I came to say.
His presence vexes to my very soul.
Vic. One called to manage kingdoms, Charles, needs heart
To bear up under worse annoyances
Than D'Ormea seems—to me, at least.
Cha. [*Aside.*] Ah, good !
He keeps me to the point ! Then be it so.
[*Aloud.*] Last night, sire, brought me certain papers—these—
To be reported on,—your way of late.
Is it last night's result that you demand ?
Vic. For God's sake, what has night brought forth ? Pronounce
The . . what 's your word ?—result
Cha. Sire, that had proved
Quite worthy of your sneers, no doubt :—a few
Lame thoughts regard for you alone could wring,
Lame as they are, from brains, like mine, believe.
As 'tis, sire, I am spared both toil and sneer.
There are the papers.
Vic. Well, sir ? I suppose
You hardly burned them. Now for your result.
Cha. I never should have done great things of course,
But . . oh, my father, had you loved me more !

Vic. Loved you? [*Aside.*] Has D'Ormea played me
false, I wonder?
[*Aloud.*] Why, Charles, a king's love is diffused—
yourself
May overlook, perchance, your part in it.
Our monarchy is absolutest now
In Europe, or my trouble 's thrown away:
I love, my mode, that subjects each and all
May have the power of loving, all and each,
Their mode: I doubt not many have their sons
To trifle with, talk soft to, all day long—
I have that crown, this chair, and D'Ormea, Charles.
Cha. 'Tis well I am a subject then, not you.
Vic. [*Aside.*] D'Ormea has told him everything.
[*Aloud.*] Aha!
I apprehend you: when all 's said, you take
Your private station to be prized beyond
My own, for instance?
Cha. —Do and ever did
So take it: 'tis the method that aggrieves. . .
Vic. These words! these words! Let me express,
my friend,
Your thought. You penetrate what I supposed
A secret. D'Ormea plies his trade betimes!
I purpose to resign my crown to you.
Cha. To me?
Vic. Now—in that chamber.
Cha. You resign
The crown to me?
Vic. And time enough, Charles, sure?
Confess with me, at four-and-sixty years
A crown 's a load. I covet quiet once

Before I die, and summoned you for that.
Cha. 'Tis I will speak: you ever hated me,
I bore it,—have insulted me, borne too—
Now you insult yourself, and I remember
What I believed you, what you really are,
And cannot bear it. What! My life has passed
Under your eye, tormented as you know,—
Your whole sagacities one after one
At leisure brought to bear on me—to prove
Me—fool, I thought, and I submitted; now
You'd prove . . . what would you prove me?
Vic. This to me?
I hardly know you!
Cha. Know me? Oh, indeed
You do not! Wait till I complain next time
Of my simplicity!—for here 's a sage—
Knows the world well—is not to be deceived—
And his experience and his Macchiavels,
His D'Ormeas, teach him—what?—that I, this while,
Have envied him his crown! He has not smiled,
I warrant,—has not eaten, drunk, or slept,
For I was plotting with my princess yonder!
Who knows what we might do or might not do?
Go now—be politic—astound the world!—
That sentry in the antichamber . . nay
The varlet who disposed this precious trap
[*Pointing to the crown.*
That was to take me—ask them if they think
Their own sons envy them their posts!—Know me!
Vic. But you know me, it seems; so learn in brief
My pleasure. The assembly is convened . . .
Cha. Tell me Sebastian put it in your head—

You were not sole contriver of the scheme,
My father!
Vic. Now observe me, sir! I jest
Seldom—on these points, never. Here to witness
(I say they are assembled) me concede,
And you accept Sardinia's crown.
Cha. Farewell!
'Twere vain to hope to change this—I can end it.
Not that I cease from being yours when sunk
Into obscurity. I'd die for you,
But not annoy you with my presence—Sire,
Farewell! Farewell!

Enter D'Ormea.

D'O. [*Aside.*] Ha, sure he 's changed again—
Means not to fall into the cunning trap—
Then, Victor, I shall yet escape you, Victor!
Vic. [*Suddenly placing the crown upon the head of* Charles.] D'Ormea, your King!
[*To* Charles.] My son, obey me! Charles,
Your father, clearer-sighted than yourself,
Decides it must be so. 'Faith, this looks real!
My reasons after—reason upon reason
After—but now, obey me! Trust in me!
By this, you save Savoy, my subjects, me!
Why the boy swoons. Come this side!
D'O. [*As* Charles *turns from him to* Victor.]
You persist?
Vic. Yes—I conceive the gesture's meaning. 'Faith,
He almost seems to hate you—how is that?

Be re-assured, my Charles. Is't over now?
Then, Marquis, tell the new King what remains
To do! A moment's work. Del Borgo reads
The Act of Abdication out, you sign it,
Then I sign; after that, come back to me.
D'O. Sire, for the last time, pause!
Vic. Five minutes longer
I am your sovereign, Marquis. Hesitate—
And I'll so turn those minutes to account
That . . . Ay, you recollect me!
[*Aside.*] Could I bring
My foolish mind to undergo the reading
That Act of Abdication!
[*As* CHARLES *motions* D'ORMEA *to precede him.*
Thanks, dear Charles!
[*Exeunt* CHARLES *and* D'ORMEA.
Vic. A novel feature in the boy,—indeed
Just that I feared he wanted most—quite right,
This earnest tone—your truth, now, for effect!
It answers every purpose: with that look—
That voice,—I hear him: "I began no treaty,"
(He speaks to Spain,) "nor ever dreamed of this
You show me; this I from my soul regret;
But if my father signed it, bid not me
Dishonour him—who gave me all, beside."
And, "truth," says Spain, "'twere harsh to visit that
Upon the prince." Then come the nobies trooping:
"I grieve at these exactions—I had cut
This hand off ere imposed them; but shall I
Undo my father's deed?"—And they confer:
"Doubtless he was no party, after all;
Give the prince time!"—

Ay, give us time—but time!
Only, he must not when the dark day comes
Refer our friends to me and frustrate all.
We'll have no child's play, no desponding-fits,
No Charles at each cross turn entreating Victor
To take his crown again. Guard against that!
Long live King Charles!—

Enter D'Ormea.

King Charles's counsellor!
Well, is it over, Marquis? Did I jest?
D'O. King Charles! What then may you be?
Vic. Anything.
A country gentleman that 's cured of bustle
And beats a quick retreat towards Chamberri
To hunt and hawk, and leave you noisy folk
To drive your trade without him. I'm Count Remont—
Count Tende—any little place's Count!
D'O. Then, Victor, Captain against Catinat
At Staffarde where the French beat you, and Duke
At Turin where you beat the French—King, late,
Of Savoy, Piedmont, Montferrat, Sardinia,
—Now, any little place's Count . . .
Vic. Proceed.
D'O. Breaker of vows to God who crowned you first,
Breaker of vows to Man who kept you since,
Most profligate to me who outraged God
And Man to serve you, and am made pay crimes
I was but privy to, by passing thus
To your imbecile son—who, well you know,

Must,—when the people here, and nations there,
Clamour for you, the main delinquent, slipt
From King to—Count of any little place
—Surrender me, all left within his reach,—
I, sir, forgive you : for I see the end—
See you on your return (you will return)
To him you trust in for the moment . . .
Vic. How ?
Trust in him? (merely a prime minister
This D'Ormea !) How trust in him ?
D'O. In his fear—
His love,—but pray discover for yourself
What you are weakest trusting in !
Vic. Aha,
My D'Ormea, not a shrewder scheme than this
In your repertory ? You know old Victor—
Vain, choleric, inconstant, rash—(I've heard
Talkers who little thought the King so close)
Felicitous, now, were 't not, to provoke him
To clean forget, one minute afterward,
His solemn act—to call the nobles back
And pray them give again the very power
He has abjured?—for the dear sake of—what ?
Vengeance on you ! No, D'Ormea : such am I,
Count Tende or Count anything you please,
—Only, the same that did the things you say,
And, among other things you say not, used
Your finest fibre, meanest muscle,—you
I used, and now, since you will have it so,
Leave to your fate—mere lumber in the midst,
You and your works—Why, what on earth beside
Are you made for, you sort of ministers ?

D'O. —Left, though, at Chamberri? Your witless son
Has more wit than to load himself with lumber:
He foils you that way, and I follow you.
Vic. Stay with my son—protect the weaker side!
D'O. Ay, be tossed to the people like a rag,
And flung by them to Spain and Austria—so
Abolishing the record of your part
In all this perfidy!
Vic. Prevent, beside,
My own return!
D'O. That's half prevented now.
'Twill go hard but you'll find a wondrous charm
In exile to discredit me. The Alps—
Silk-mills to watch—vines asking vigilance—
Hounds open for the stag—your hawk's a-wing—
Brave days that wait the Louis of the South,
Italy's Janus!
Vic. So the lawyer's clerk
Won't tell me that I shall repent!
D'O. You give me
Full leave to ask if you repent?
Vic. Whene'er
Sufficient time 's elapsed for that, you judge.
[*Shouts inside,* "King Charles."
D'O. Do you repent?
Vic. [*After a slight pause.*] . . . I've kept them waiting? Yes.
Come in—complete the Abdication, sir! [*Exeunt.*

Enter POLYXENA.

Pol. A shout? The sycophants are free of Charles!
Oh, is not this like Italy? No fruit
Of his or my distempered fancy, this—
But just an ordinary fact! Beside
Here they've set forms for such proceedings—Victor
Imprisoned his own mother—he should know,
If any, how a son 's to be deprived
Of a son's right. Our duty 's palpable.
Ne'er was my husband for the wily king
And the unworthy subjects—be it so.
Come you safe out of them, my Charles! Our life
Grows not the broad and dazzling life I dreamed
Might prove your lot—for strength was shut in you
None guessed but I—strength which, untrammeled once,
Had little shamed your vaunted ancestry—
Patience and self-devotion, fortitude,
Simplicity and utter truthfulness
—All which they shout to lose!
So, now my work
Begins—to save him from regret. Save Charles
Regret?—the noble nature! He 's not made
Like the Italians: 'tis a German soul.

CHARLES *enters crowned.*

Oh, where 's the King's heir? Gone:—the Crown-prince? Gone—
Where 's Savoy? Gone:—Sardinia? Gone!—But Charles
Is left! And when my Rhine-land bowers arrive,

If he looked almost handsome yester-twilight
As his grey eyes seemed widening into black
Because I praised him, then how will he look?
Farewell you stripped and whited mulberry-trees
Bound each to each by lazy ropes of vine!
Now I'll teach you my language—I'm not forced
To speak Italian now, Charles?
[*She sees the crown.*] What is this?
Answer me—who has done this? Answer!
Cha. He:
I am King now.
Pol. Oh worst, worst, worst of all!
Tell me—what, Victor? He has made you King?
What's he then? What's to follow this? You, King?
Cha. Have I done wrong? Yes—for you were not by!
Pol. Tell me from first to last.
Cha. Hush—a new world
Brightens before me; he is moved away
—The dark form that eclipsed it, he subsides
Into a shape supporting me like yours,
And I alone tend upward, more and more
Tend upward: I am grown Sardinia's King.
Pol. Now stop: was not this Victor Duke of Savoy
At ten years old?
Cha. He was.
Pol. And the Duke spent
Since then just four-and-fifty years in toil
To be—what?
Cha. King.
Pol. Then why unking himself?
Cha. Those ten and four-and-fifty years.

Pol. Those only?
Cha. Some new perplexities.
Pol. Which you can solve
Although he cannot?
Cha. He assures me so.
Pol. And this he means shall last—how long?
Cha. How long?
Think you I fear the perils I confront?
He 's praising me before the people's face—
My people!
Pol. Then he 's changed—grown kind, the King?
(Where can the trap be?)
Cha. Heart and soul—and soul,
My father, could I guard the Crown you gained,
Deliver it as I received it,—all
Would I surrender!
Pol. Ah, it opens then
Before you—all you dreaded formerly?
You are rejoiced to be a king, my Charles?
Cha. So much to dare? The better;—much to dread?
The better. I'll adventure tho' alone.
Triumph or die, there 's Victor still to witness
Who dies or triumphs—either way, alone.
Pol. Once I had found my share in triumph, Charles,
Or death.
Cha. But you are me! But you I call
To take, Heaven's proxy, vows I tendered Heaven
A moment since. I will deserve the crown!
Pol. You will. [*Aside.*] No doubt it were a glorious thing

For any people if a heart like his
Ruled over it. I would I saw the trap!

Enter VICTOR.

'Tis he must show me.
Vic. So the mask falls off
An old man's foolish love at last! Spare thanks—
I know you, and Polyxena I know.
Here 's Charles—I am his guest now—does he bid me
Be seated? And my light-haired, blue-eyed child
Must not forget the old man far away
At Chamberri, who dozes while she reigns?
Pol. Most grateful shall we now be, talking least
Of gratitude—indeed of anything
That hinders what yourself must have to say
To Charles.
Cha. Pray speak, sire!
Vic. 'Faith, not much to say—
Only what shows itself, once in the point
Of sight. You are now the King: you'll comprehend
Much you may oft have wondered at—the shifts,
Dissimulation, wiliness I showed.
For what 's our post? Here 's Savoy and here 's Piedmont,
Here 's Montferrat—a breadth here, a space there—
To o'er-sweep all these what 's one weapon worth?
I often think of how they fought in Greece
(Or Rome, which was it? You're the scholar, Charles)
You made a front-thrust? But if your shield, too,
Were not adroitly planted—some shrewd knave
Reached you behind; and, him foiled, straight if thong

And handle of that shield were not cast loose
And you enabled to outstrip the wind,
Fresh foes assailed you either side; 'scape these
And reach your place of refuge—e'en then, odds
If the gate opened unless breath enough
Was left in you to make its Lord a speech.
Oh, you will see!
Cha. No: straight on shall I go,
Truth helping; win with it or die with it.
Vic. 'Faith, Charles, you're not made Europe's fighting-man.
Its barrier-guarder, if you please. You hold,
Not take—consolidate, with envious French
This side and Austrians that, these territories
I held—ay, and will hold . . . which you shall hold
Despite the couple! But I've surely earned
The privilege to prattle with my son
And daughter tho' the world should wait the while.
Pol. Nay, sire,—at Chamberri, away for ever,
As soon you'll be, 'tis a farewell we bid you!
Turn these few fleeting moments to account!
'Tis just as though it were a death.
Vic. Indeed!
Pol. [*Aside.*] Is the trap there?
Cha. Ay, call this parting—death!
The sacreder your memory becomes.
If I misrule Sardinia, how bring back
My father? No—that thought shall ever urge me.
Vic. I do not mean . . .
Pol. [*Who watches* VICTOR *narrowly this while.*]
Your father does not mean
That you are ruling for your father's sake:

It is your people must concern you wholly
Instead of him. You meant this, sire? (He drops
My hand!)

Cha. That People is now part of me.

Vic. About the People! I took certain measures
Some short time since . . Oh, I'm aware you know
But little of my measures—these affect
The nobles—we've resumed some grants, imposed
A tax or two; prepare yourself, in short,
For clamours on that score: mark me: you yield
No jot of what 's entrusted you!

Pol. No jot
You yield!

Cha. My father, when I took the oath,
Although my eye might stray in search of yours,
I heard it, understood it, promised God
What you require. Till from this eminence
He moves me, here I keep, nor shall concede
The meanest of my rights.

Vic. [*Aside.*] The boy 's a fool.
—Or rather, I'm a fool: for, what 's wrong here?
To-day the sweets of reigning—let to-morrow
Be ready with its bitters.

Enter D'Ormea.

There 's beside
Somewhat to press upon your notice first.

Cha. Then why delay it for an instant, sire?
That Spanish claim, perchance? And, now you speak
—This morning my opinion was mature
Which, boy-like, I was bashful in producing

To you—I ne'er am like to fear in future!
My thought is formed upon that Spanish claim.
Vic. (Betimes indeed.) Not now, Charles. You require
A host of papers on it—
D'O. [*Coming forward.*] Here they are.
[*To* CHARLES.] I was the minister and much beside
Of the late monarch: to say little, him
I served; on you I have, to say e'en less,
No claim. This case contains those papers: with them
I tender you my office.
Vic. [*Hastily.*] Keep him, Charles!
There 's reason for it—many reasons: you
Distrust him, nor are so far wrong there,—but
He 's mixed up in this matter—he'll desire
To quit you, for occasions known to me:
Do not accept those reasons—have him stay!
Pol. [*Aside.*] His minister thrust on us!
Cha. [*To* D'ORMEA.] Sir, believe
In justice to myself you do not need
E'en this commending: whatsoe'er might be
My feelings towards you as a private man,
They quit me in the vast and untried field
Of action. Though I shall myself (as late
In your own hearing I engaged to do)
Preside o'er my Sardinia, yet your help
Is necessary. Think the past forgotten,
And serve me now!
D'O. I did not offer you
My services—would I could serve you, sire!
As for the Spanish matter . . .

Vic. But despatch
At least the dead, in my good daughter's phrase,
Before the living! Help to house me safe
Ere you and D'Ormea set the world a-gape!
Here is a paper—will you overlook
What I propose reserving for my needs?
I get as far from you as possible.
There's what I reckon my expenditure.

Cha. [*Reading.*] A miserable fifty thousand crowns.

Vic. Oh, quite enough for country gentlemen!
Beside the exchequer happens . . . but find out
All that yourself.

Cha. [*Still reading.*] Count Tende—what is this?

Vic. Me: you were but an infant when I burst
Through the defile of Tende upon France.
Had only my allies kept true to me!
No matter. Tende 's then a name I take
Just as . . .

D'O. The Marchioness Sebastian takes
The name of Spigno.

Cha. How, sir?

Vic. [*To* D'Ormea.] Fool! All that
Was for my own detailing. [*To* Charles.] That anon!

Cha. [*To* D'Ormea.] Explain what you have said, sir!

D'O. I supposed
The marriage of the King to her I named,
Profoundly kept a secret these few weeks,
Was not to be one now he 's Count.

Pol. [*Aside.*] With us
The minister—with him the mistress!

Cha. [*To* Victor.] No—

Tell me you have not taken her—that woman
To live with past recall !

Vic. And where 's the crime . . .

Pol. [*To* CHARLES.] True, sir, this is a matter past recall,
And past your cognizance. A day before,
And you had been compelled to note this—now
Why note it ? The King saved his House from shame :
What the Count does is no concern of yours.

Cha. [*After a pause.*] The Spanish business, D'Ormea !

Vic. Why, my son,
I took some ill-advised . . . one's age, in fact,
Spoils everything : though I was over-reached,
A younger brain, we'll trust, may extricate
Sardinia readily. To-morrow, D'Ormea,
Inform the King !

D'O. [*Without regarding* VICTOR, *and leisurely.*] Thus stands the case with Spain :
When first the Infant Carlos claimed his proper
Succession to the throne of Tuscany . . .

Vic. I tell you, that stands over ! Let that rest !
There is the policy.

Cha. [*To* D'ORMEA.] Thus much I know,
And more—too much : the remedy ?

D'O. Of course !
No glimpse of one—

Vic. No remedy at all !
It makes the remedy itself—time makes it.

D'O. [*To* CHARLES.] But if . . .

Vic. [*Still more hastily.*] In fine, I shall take care of that—

And, with another project that I have . . .
D'O. [*Turning on him.*] Oh, since Count Tende
means to take again
King Victor's crown!—
Pol. [*Throwing herself at* VICTOR'S *feet.*]
E'en now retake it, sire!
Oh, speak! We are your subjects both once more!
Say it—a word effects it! You meant not,
Nor do mean now, to take it—but you must!
'Tis in you—in your nature—and the shame's
Not half the shame 'twould grow to afterward!
Cha. Polyxena!
Pol. A word recalls the Knights—
Say it!—What 's promising and what 's the past?
Say you are still King Victor!
D'O. Better say
The Count repents, in brief! [VICTOR *rises.*
Cha. With such a crime
I have not charged you, sire!
Pol. Charles turns from me!
[*Exeunt singly.*

SECOND YEAR, 1731.

KING CHARLES. PART I.

Enter QUEEN POLYXENA *and* D'ORMEA—*A pause.*

Pol. And now, sir, what have you to say?
D'O. Count Tende . . .
Pol. Affirm not I betrayed you; you resolve
On uttering this strange intelligence
—Nay, post yourself to find me ere I reach
The capital, because you know King Charles
Tarries a day or two at Evian baths
Behind me:—but take warning,—here and thus
[*Seating herself in the Royal seat.*
I listen, if I listen—not your friend.
Explicitly the statement, if you still
Persist to urge it on me, must proceed:
I am not made for aught else.
D'O. Good: Count Tende . . .
Pol. I, who mistrust you, shall acquaint King Charles,
Who even more mistrusts you.
D'O. Does he so?
Pol. Why should he not?
D'O. Ay, why not? Motives, seek
You virtuous people, motives! Say, I serve
God at the devil's bidding—will that do?
I'm proud: our People have been pacified
(Really I know not how)—
Pol. By truthfulness,

D'O. Exactly ; that shows I had nought to do
With pacifying them : our foreign perils
Also exceed my means to stay : but here
'Tis otherwise, and my pride 's piqued. Would you, madam,
Have the old monarch back, his mistress back,
His measures back ? I pray you act upon
My counsel, or they will be.
Pol. When ?
D'O. Let 's think.
Home-matters settled—Victor 's coming now ;
Let foreign matters settle—Victor 's here :
Unless I stop him, as I will this way.
Pol. [*Reading the papers he presents.*] If this should prove a plot 'twixt you and Victor ?
You seek annoyances to give him pretext
For what you say you fear !
D'O. Oh, possibly !
I go for nothing. Only show King Charles
That thus Count Tende purposes return,
And style me his inviter if you please.
Pol. Half of your tale is true ; most like the Count
Would come : but wherefore are you left with us ?
To aid in such emergencies.
D'O. Keep safe
Those papers : or, to serve me, leave no proof
I thus have counselled : when the Count returns
And the King abdicates, 'twill stead me little
To have thus counselled.
Pol. The King abdicate !
D'O. He 's good, we knew long since—wise, we discover—

Firm, let us hope :—but I'd have gone to work
And he away. Well !
[CHARLES *without.*] In the Council Chamber ?
D'O All 's lost.
Pol. Oh, surely not King Charles ! He 's changed.
That 's not this year's care—burthened voice and step :
'Tis last year's step—the Prince's voice !
D'O. I know.

Enter CHARLES—D'ORMEA *retiring a little.*

Cha. Now wish me joy, Polyxena ! Wish it me
The old way. [*She embraces him.*
There was too much cause for that !
But I have found myself again ! What's news
At Turin ? Oh, if you but felt the load
I'm free of—free ! I said this year would end
Or it or me—but I am free, thank God !
Pol. How, Charles ?
Cha. You do not guess ! The day I found
Sardinia's hideous coil, at home, abroad—
And how my father was involved in it,—
Of course I vowed to rest or smile no more
Until I freed his name from obloquy.
We did the people right—'twas much to gain
That point, redress our nobles' grievance too—
But that took place here, was no crying shame :
All must be done abroad,—if I abroad
Appease the justly-angered Powers, destroy
The scandal, take down Victor's name at last
From a bad eminence, I then may breathe

And rest! No moment was to lose: behold
The proud result—a Treaty Austria, Spain
Agree to—
D'O. [*Aside.*] I shall merely stipulate
For an experienced headsman.
Cha. Not a soul
Is compromised: the blotted Past's a blank:
Even D'Ormea will escape unquestioned. See!
This reached me from Vienna; I remained
At Evian to despatch the Count his news;
'Tis gone to Chamberri a week ago—
And here am I: do I deserve to feel
Your warm white arms around me?
D'O. [*Coming forward.*] He knows that?
Cha. What, in Heaven's name, means this?
D'O. He knows that matters
Are settled at Vienna? Not too late!
Plainly, unless you post this very hour
Some man you trust (say, me) to Chamberri,
And take precautions I acquaint you with,
Your father will return here.
Cha. Is he crazed,
This D'Ormea? Here? For what? As well return
To take his crown!
D'O. He does return for that.
Cha. [*To* Polyxena.] You have not listened to this man?
Pol. He spoke
About your safety—and I listened.
[*He disengages himself from her arms.*
Cha. [*To* D'Ormea.] What
Apprised you of the Count's intentions?

D'O. Me?
His heart, sire; you may not be used to read
Such evidence, however; therefore read
[*Pointing to* POLYXENA'S *papers.*
My evidence.

Cha. [*To* POLYXENA.] Oh, worthy this of you!
And of your speech I never have forgotten
Tho' I professed forgetfulness—which haunts me
As if I did not know how false it was—
Which made me toil inconsciously thus long
That there might be no least occasion left
For what your speech predicted coming true!
And now when there is left no least occasion
To instigate my father to such crime—
When I might venture to forget, I hoped,
That speech and recognize Polyxena—
Oh, worthy to revive and tenfold worse
That plague now! D'Ormea at your ear, his slanders
Still in your hand! Silent?

Pol. As the wronged are.

Cha. And, D'Ormea, pray since when have you presumed
To spy upon my father? (I conceive
What that wise paper shows and easily.)
Since when?

D'O. The when, and where, and how, belong
To me—'Tis sad work, but I deal in such.
You ofttimes serve yourself—I'd serve you here:
Use makes me not so squeamish. In a word,
Since the first hour he went to Chamberri,
Of his seven servants five have I suborned.

Cha. You hate my father?

D'O. Oh, just as you will.
[*Looking at* POLYXENA.
A minute since I loved him—hate him now!
What matters?—If you ponder just one thing.
Has he that Treaty?—He is setting forward
Already. Are your guards here?
Cha. Well for you
I have none. [*To* POLYXENA.] Him I knew of old,
but you—
To hear that pickthank, further his designs!
[*To* D'ORMEA.
Guards? were they here, I'd bid them for your trouble
Arrest you.
D'O. Guards you shall not want. I lived
The servant of your choice, not of your need.
You never greatly needed me till now
That you discard me. This is my arrest.
Again I tender you my charge—its duty
Would bid me press you read those documents.
Here, sire! [*Offering his badge of office.*
Cha. [*Taking it.*] The papers also! Do you think
I dare not read them?
Pol. Read them, sir!
Cha. They prove
My father, still a month within the year
Since he so solemnly consigned it me,
Means to resume his crown? They shall prove that,
Or my best dungeon . . .
D'O. Even say Chamberri!
'Tis vacant, I surmise, by this.
Cha. You prove
Your words or pay their forfeit, sir. Go there!

Polyxena, one chance to rend the veil
Thickening and blackening 'twixt us two. Do say
You'll see the falsehood of the charges proved!
Do say, at least, you wish to see them proved
False charges—my heart's love of other times!

Pol. Ah, Charles!

Cha. [*To* D'Ormea.] Precede me, sir!

D'O. And I'm at length
A martyr for the truth! No end, they say,
Of miracles. My conscious innocence!

[*As they go out, enter—by the middle door—at which he pauses*—Victor.

Vic. Sure I heard voices? No! Well, I do best
To make at once for this, the heart o' the place.
The old room! Nothing changed!—So near my seat,
D'Ormea? [*Pushing away the stool which is by the King's chair.*
I want that meeting over first,
I know not why. Tush, D'Ormea won't be slow
To hearten me, the supple knave! That burst
Of spite so eased him! He'll inform me . . .
What?
Why come I hither? All 's in rough—let all
Remain rough; there 's full time to draw back—nay,
There 's nought to draw back from as yet; whereas
If reason should be to arrest a course
Of error—reason good to interpose
And save, as I have saved so many times,
My House—admonish my son's giddy youth—
Relieve him of a weight that proves too much—
Now is the time,—or now or never. 'Faith,
This kind of step is pitiful—not due

To Charles, this stealing back—hither because
He 's from his Capital! Oh, Victor—Victor—
But thus it is: the age of crafty men
Is loathsome—youth contrives to carry off
Dissimulation—we may intersperse
Extenuating passages of strength,
Ardour, vivacity, and wit—may turn
E'en guile into a voluntary grace,
But one's old age, when graces drop away
And leave guile the pure staple of our lives—
Ah, loathsome!
Not so—or why pause I? Turin
Is mine to have, were I so minded, for
The asking; all the Army 's mine—I've witnessed
Each private fight beneath me; all the Court 's
Mine too; and, best of all, my D'Ormea 's still
His D'Ormea; no! There 's some grace clinging yet.
Had I decided on this step, ere midnight
I'd take the crown—
No! Just this step to rise
Exhausts me! Here am I arrived—the rest
Must be done for me. Would I could sit here
And let things right themselves—the masque unmasque
Of the King, crownless, grey hairs and hot blood,—
The young King, crowned, but calm before his time,
They say,—the eager woman with her taunts,—
And the sad earnest wife who beckons me
Away—ay, there she knelt to me! E'en yet
I can return and sleep at Chamberri
A dream out. Rather shake it off at Turin,
King Victor! Is't to Turin—yes or no?

'Tis this relentless noonday-lighted chamber
That disconcerts me. Some one flung doors wide
(Those two great doors that scrutinise me now)
And out I went mid crowds of men—men talking,
Men watching if my lip fell or brow changed;
Men saw me safe forth—put me on my road:
That makes the misery of this return!
Oh, had a battle done it! Had I dropped
—Haling some battle three entire days old
Hither and thither by the forehead—sunk
In Spain, in Austria, best of all in France—
Spurned on its horns or underneath its hooves
When the spent monster goes upon its knees
To pad and pash the prostrate wretch—I, Victor,
Sole to have stood up against France—beat down
By inches, brayed to pieces finally
By some vast unimaginable charge—
A flying hell of horse and foot and guns
Over me, and all 's lost, for ever lost—
There 's no more Victor when the world wakes up!
Then silence, as of a raw battle-field,
Throughout the world. Then after (as whole weeks
After, you catch at intervals faint noise
Thro' the stiff crust of frozen blood)—to creep
A rumour forth, so faint, no noise at all,
That a strange old man, face outworn for wounds,
Is stumbling on from frontier town to town,
Begging a pittance that may help him find
His Turin out; laughter and scorn to follow
The coin you fling into his cap: and last,
Some bright morn, to see crowds about the midst
Of the market-place where takes the old man breath

Ere with his crutch he strike the palace-gate
Wide ope!
To Turin, yes or no—or no?

Re-enter CHARLES *with papers.*

Cha. Just as I thought! A miserable falsehood
Of hirelings discontented with their pay
And longing for enfranchisement! A few
Testy expressions of old age that thinks
To keep alive its dignity o'er slaves
By means that suit their natures!
[*Tearing them.*] Thus they shake
My faith in Victor! [*Turning, he discovers* VICTOR.
Vic. [*After a pause.*] Not at Evian, Charles?
What 's this? Why do you run to close the doors?
No welcome for your father?
Cha. [*Aside.*] Not his voice!
What would I give for one imperious tone
Of the old sort! That 's gone for ever.
Vic. Must
I ask once more . . .
Cha. No, I concede it, sir!
You are returned for . . . true, your health declines—
True, Chamberri 's a bleak unkindly spot—
You'd choose one fitter for your final lodge—
Veneria—or Moncaglier—ay, that 's close,
And I concede it.
Vic. I received advices
Of the conclusion of the Spanish matter
Dated from Evian baths.—
Cha. And you forbore

To visit me at Evian, satisfied
The work I had to do would fully task
The little wit I have, and that your presence
Would only disconcert me—
Vic. Charles?
Cha. —Me—set
For ever in a foreign course to yours,
And . . .
Sir, this way of wile were good to catch,
But I have not the sleight of it. The truth!
Though I sink under it! What brings you here?
Vic. Not hope of this reception, certainly,
From one who'd scarce assume a stranger mode
Of speech did I return to bring about
Some awfulest calamity.
Cha. —You mean
Did you require your crown again: Oh yes,
I should speak otherwise! But turn not that
To jesting! Sir, the truth! Your health declines?
Is aught deficient in your equipage?
Wisely you seek myself to make complaint,
And foil the malice of the world which seizes
On petty discontents; but I shall care
That not a soul knows of this visit. Speak!
Vic. [*Aside.*] Here is the grateful, much-professing son
Who was to worship me, and for whose sake
I near had waived my plans of public good!
[*Aloud.*] Nay, Charles, if I did seek to take once more
My crown, and were disposed to plague myself—
What would be warrant for this bitterness?
I gave it—grant I would resume it—well?

Cha. I should say simply—leaving out the why
And how—you made me swear to keep that crown:
And as you then intended. . .
Vic. Fool! What way
Could I intend or not intend? As man,
With a man's life, when I say "I intend,"
I can intend up to a certain point,
No further. I intended to preserve
The Crown of Savoy and Sardinia whole:
And if events arise to demonstrate
The way I took to keep it, rather 's like
To lose it. . .
Cha. Keep within your sphere and mine!
It is God's province we usurp on else.
Here, blindfold thro' the maze of things we walk
By a slight thread of false, true, right and wrong;
Truth here for us—truth everywhere for God:
All else is rambling and presumption. I
Have sworn to keep this kingdom: there 's my truth.
Vic. Truth, boy, is here—within my breast; and in
Your recognition of it, truth is too;
And in the effect of all this tortuous dealing
With falsehood, used to carry out the truth,
—In its success, this falsehood is again
Truth for the world! But you are right: these themes
Are over-subtle. I should rather say
In such a case, frankly,—it fails, my scheme:
I hoped to see you bring about, yourself,
What I must bring about: I interpose
On your behalf—with my son's good in sight—
To hold what he is nearly letting go—
Confirm his title, add a grace, perhaps—

There 's Sicily, for instance,—granted me
And taken back, some years since—till I give
That island with the rest, my work 's half done.
For his sake, therefore, as of those he rules . . .
Cha. Our sakes are one—and that you could not say,
Because my answer would present itself
Forthwith;—a year has wrought an age's change:
This people 's not the people now you once
Could benefit, nor is my policy
Your policy.
Vic. [*With an outburst.*] I know it! You undo
All I have done—my life of toil and care!
I left you this the absolutest rule
In Europe—do you think I will sit still
And see you throw all power to the people—
See my Sardinia, that has stood apart,
Join in the mad and democratic whirl
Whereto I see all Europe haste full-tide?
England casts off her kings—France mimics England—
This realm I hoped was safe! Yet here I talk,
When I can save it, not by force alone,
But bidding plagues which follow sons like you
Fasten upon my disobedient . . .
[*Recollecting himself.*] Surely
I could say this—if minded so—my son?
Cha. You could not! Bitterer curses than your curse
Have I long since denounced upon myself
If I misused my power. In fear of these
I entered on those measures—will abide
By them: so I should say, Count Tende—
Vic. No!

But no! But if, my Charles, your—more than old—
Half-foolish father urged these arguments,
And then confessed them futile, but said plainly
That he forgot his promise, found his strength
Fail him, had thought at savage Chamberri
Too much of brilliant Turin, Rivoli here,
And Susa, and Veneria, and Superga—
Pined for the pleasant places he had built
When he was fortunate and young—
Cha. My father!
Vic. Stay yet—and if he said he could not die
Deprived of baubles he had put aside
He deemed for ever—of the Crown that binds
Your brain up, whole, sound, and impregnable,
Creating kingliness—the Sceptre, too,
Whose mere wind, should you wave it, back would beat
Invaders—and the golden Ball which throbs
As if you grasped the palpitating heart
Indeed o' the realm, to mould as choose you may!
—If I must totter up and down the streets
My sires built, where myself have introduced
And fostered laws and letters, sciences,
The civil and the military arts—
Stay, Charles—I see you letting me pretend
To live my former self once more—King Victor
The venturous yet politic—they style me
Again the Father of the Prince—friends winking
Good-humouredly at the delusion you're
So sedulous in guarding from sad truth,
That else would break upon the dotage!—You
Whom now I see preventing my old shame—
I tell not, point by cruel point, my tale—

For is't not in your breast my brow is hid?
Is not your hand extended? Say you not . . .

Enter D'Ormea, *leading in* Polyxena.

Pol. [*Advancing and withdrawing* Charles — *to* Victor.] In this conjuncture, even, he would say
(Tho' with a moistened eye and quivering lip)
The suppliant is my father—I must save
A great man from himself, nor see him fling
His well-earned fame away: there must not follow
Ruin so utter, a break-down of worth
So absolute: no enemy shall learn
He thrust his child 'twixt danger and himself,
And, when that child somehow stood danger out,
Stole back with serpent wiles to ruin Charles
—Body, that's much,—and soul, that's more—and realm,
That's most of all! No enemy shall say . . .

D'O. Do you repent, sir?

Vic. [*Resuming himself.*] D'Ormea? This is well!
Worthily done, King Charles, craftily done!
Judiciously you post these to o'erhear
The little your importunate father thrusts
Himself on you to say! Ay, they'll correct
The amiable blind facility
You showed in answering his peevish suit:
What can he need to sue for? Bravely, D'Ormea,
Have you fulfilled your office: but for you,
The old Count might have drawn some few more livres
To swell his income! Had you, Lady, missed
The moment, a permission had been granted

To build afresh my ruinous old pile—
But you remembered properly the list
Of wise precautions I took when I gave
Nearly as much away—to reap the fruits
I ever looked for!
Cha. Thanks, sir: degrade me,
So you remain yourself. Adieu!
Vic. I'll not
Forget it for the future, nor presume
Next time to slight such potent mediators!
Had I first moved them both to intercede,
I might have had a chamber in Moncaglier?
—Who knows?
Cha. Adieu!
Vic. You bid me this adieu
With the old spirit?
Cha. Adieu!
Vic. Charles—Charles—
Cha. Adieu! [*Exit* VICTOR.
Cha. You were mistaken, Marquis, as you hear!
'Twas for another purpose the Count came.
The Count desires Moncaglier. Give the order!
D'O. [*Leisurely.*] Your minister has lost your confidence,
Asserting late, for his own purposes,
Count Tende would . . .
Cha. [*Flinging his badge back.*] Be still our minister!
And give a loose to your insulting joy—
It irks me more thus stifled than expressed.
Loose it!
D'O. There's none to loose, alas!—I see
I never am to die a martyr!

Pol. Charles!

Cha. No praise, at least, Polyxena—no praise!

[*Exeunt omnes.*

KING CHARLES. PART II.

Night.—D'Ormea *seated, folding papers he has been examining.*

This at the last effects it: now, King Charles
Or else King Victor—that's a balance: now
For D'Ormea the arch-culprit, either turn
O' the scale, that's sure enough. A point to solve,
My masters—moralists—whate'er's your style!
When you discover why I push myself
Into a pitfall you'd pass safely by,
Impart to me among the rest! No matter.
Prompt are the righteous ever with their rede
To us the wicked—lesson them this once!
For safe among the wicked are you set,
Old D'Ormea. We lament life's brevity,
Yet quarter e'en the threescore years and ten,
Nor stick to call the quarter roundly "life."
D'Ormea was wicked, say, some twenty years—
A tree so long was stunted—afterward
What if it grew, continued growing, till
No fellow of the forest equalled it?
'Twas a shrub then—a shrub it still must be:
While forward saplings, at the outset checked,
In virtue of that first sprout keep their style
Amid the forest's green fraternity.

Thus I shoot up—to surely get lopped down,
And bound up for the burning. Now for it!

Enter CHARLES *and* POLYXENA *with* Attendants.

D'O. [*Rises.*] Sire, in the due discharge of this my office—
This enforced summons of yourself from Turin,
And the disclosure I am bound to make
To-night, there must already be, I feel,
So much that wounds . . .

Cha. Well, sir?

D'O. —That I, perchance,
May utter also what another time
Would irk much,—it may prove less irksome now.

Cha. What would you utter?

D'O. That I from my soul
Grieve at to-night's event: for you I grieve—
E'en grieve for . . .

Cha. Tush, another time for talk!
I've some intelligence, and more expect.
My kingdom is in imminent danger?

D'O. Let
The Count communicate with France—its King
His grandson will have Fleury's aid for this
Though for no other war.

Cha. First for the levies
What forces can I muster presently?

[D'ORMEA *delivers papers which* CHARLES *inspects.*

Cha. Good—very good. Montorio . . how is this?
—Equips me double the old complement
Of soldiers?

D'O. Since his land has been relieved

From double impost this he manages:
But under the late monarch . . .
Cha. Peace. I know.
Count Spava has omitted mentioning
What proxy is to head these troops of his.
D'O. Count Spava means to head his troops himself.
Something 's to fight for now; "whereas," says he,
"Under the Sovereign's father" . . .
Cha. It would seem
That all my people love me.
D'O. Yes. [*To* POLYXENA, *while* CHARLES *continues to inspect the papers.*
A temper
Like Victor's may avail to keep a state—
He terrifies men and they fall not off—
Good to restrain; best, if restraint were all:
But with the silent circle round him ends
Such sway. Our King's begins precisely there.
For to suggest, impel, and set at work,
Is quite another function. Men may slight
In time of peace the King who brings them peace:
In war,—his voice, his eyes, help more than fear.
They love you, sire!
Cha. [*To* Attendants.] Bring the Regalia forth.
Quit the room. And now, Marquis, answer me—
Why should the King of France invade my realm?
D'O. Why? Did I not acquaint your Majesty
An hour ago?
Cha. I choose to hear again
What then I heard.
D'O. Because, sire, as I said,
Your father is resolved to have the crown

At any risk, and, as I judge, calls in
These foreigners to aid him.
Cha. And your reason
For saying this?
D'O. [*Aside.*] Ay, just his father's way!
[*To* CHARLES.] The Count wrote yesterday to your
Forces' Chief
Rhebinder,—made demand of help—
Cha. To try
Rhebinder—he 's of alien blood: aught else?
D'O. Receiving a refusal,—some hours after,
The Count called on Del Borgo to deliver
The Act of Abdication: he refused,
Or hesitated, rather—
Cha. What ensued?
D'O. At midnight, only two hours since, at Turin,
He rode in person to the citadel
With one attendant, to Soccorso gate,
And bade the governor San Remi open—
Admit him.
Cha. For a purpose I divine.
These three were faithful, then?
D'O. They told it me:
And I—
Cha. Most faithful—
D'O. Tell it you—with this
Moreover of my own: if, an hour hence,
You have not interposed, the Count will be
Upon his road to France for succour.
Cha. Good!
You do your duty, now, to me your monarch
Fully, I warrant?—have, that is, your project

For saving both of us disgrace, past doubt?
D'O. I have my counsel, which is the only one.
A month since, I besought you to employ
Restraints which had prevented many a pang:
But now the harsher course must have its way.
These papers, made for the emergency,
Will pain you to subscribe: this is a list
Of those suspected merely—men to watch;
This—of the few of the Count's very household
You must, however reluctantly, arrest;
While here's a method of remonstrance (sure
Not stronger than the case demands) to take
With the Count's self.
Cha. Deliver those three papers.
Pol. [*While* CHARLES *inspects them—to* D'ORMEA.]
Your measures are not over-harsh, sir: France
Will hardly be deterred from coming hither
By these.
D'O. What good of my proposing measures
Without a chance of their success? E'en these
Hear what he'll say at my presenting.
Cha. [*Who has signed them.*] There!
About the warrants! You've my signature.
What turns you pale? I do my duty by you
In acting boldly thus on your advice.
D'O. [*Reading them separately.*] Arrest the people
I suspected merely?
Cha. Did you suspect them?
D'O. Doubtless: but—but—sire,
This Forquieri's governor of Turin;
And Rivarol and he have influence over
Half of the capital.—Rabella, too?

Why, sire—

Cha. Oh, leave the fear to me.

D'O. [*Still reading.*] You bid me
Incarcerate the people on this list?
Sire—

Cha. Why, you never bade arrest those men,
So close related to my father too,
On trifling grounds?

D'O. Oh, as for that, St. George,
President of Chamberri's senators,
Is hatching treason—but—
[*Still more troubled.*] Sire, Count Cumiane
Is brother to your father's wife! What's here?
Arrest the wife herself?

Cha. You seem to think
It venial crime to plot against me. Well?

D'O. [*Who has read the last paper.*] Wherefore am
I thus ruined? Why not take
My life at once? This poor formality
Is, let me say, unworthy you! Prevent it,
You, madam! I have served you—am prepared
For all disgraces—only, let disgrace
Be plain, be proper—proper for the world
To pass its judgment on 'twixt you and me!
Take back your warrant—I will none of it.

Cha. Here is a man to talk of fickleness!
He stakes his life upon my father's falsehood,
I bid him—

D'O. Not you! Were he trebly false,
You do not bid me—

Cha. Is't not written there?
I thought so: give—I'll set it right.

D'O. Is it there?
Oh, yes—and plain—arrest him—now—drag here
Your father! And were all six times as plain,
Do you suppose I'd trust it?
Cha. Just one word!
You bring him, taken in the act of flight,
Or else your life is forfeit.
D'O. Ay, to Turin
I bring him? And to-morrow?
Cha. Here and now!
The whole thing is a lie—a hateful lie—
As I believed and as my father said.
I knew it from the first, but was compelled
To circumvent you; and the crafty D'Ormea,
That baffled Alberoni and tricked Coscia,
The miserable sower of the discord
'Twixt sire and son, is in the toils at last!
Oh, I see—you arrive—this plan of yours,
Weak as it is, torments sufficiently
A sick, old, peevish man—wrings hasty speech
And ill-considered threats from him; that 's noted;
Then out you ferret papers, his amusement
In lonely hours of lassitude—examine
The day-by-day report of your paid creatures—
And back you come—all was not ripe, you find,
And as you hope may keep from ripening yet—
But you were in bare time! Only, 'twere best
I never saw my father—these old men
Are potent in excuses—and, meantime,
D'Ormea's the man I cannot do without!
Pol. Charles—
Cha. Ah, no question! You're for D'Ormea too!

You'd have me eat and drink, and sleep, and die
With this lie coil'd about me, choking me!
No, no—he 's caught. [*To* D'Ormea.] You venture life,
you say,
Upon my father's perfidy; and I
Have, on the whole, no right to disregard
The chains of testimony you have wound
About me; though I do—do from my soul
Discredit them: still I must authorise
These measures—and I do. Perugia!
[*Many officers enter.*] Count—
You and Solar, with all the force you have,
Are at the Marquis' orders: what he bids,
Implicitly perform! You are to bring
A traitor here; the man that 's likest one
At present, fronts me; you are at his beck
For a full hour; he undertakes to show you
A fouler than himself,—but, failing that,
Return with him, and, as my father lives,
He dies this night! The clemency you've blamed
So oft, shall be revoked—rights exercised
That I've abjured.
[*To* D'Ormea.] Now, Sir, about the work!
To save your king and country! Take the warrant!
D'O. [*Boldly to* Perugia.] You hear the Sovereign's
mandate, Count Perugia?
Obey me! As your diligence, expect
Reward. All follow to Moncaglier!
Cha. [*In great anguish.*] D'Ormea!
[*Exit* D'Ormea, *cum suis.*
He goes lit up with that appalling smile!
[*To* Polyxena *after a pause.*

At least you understand all this?
Pol. These means
Of our defence—these measures of precaution?
Cha. It must be the best way. I should have else
Withered beneath his scorn.
Pol. What would you say?
Cha. Why, you don't think I mean to keep the crown,
Polyxena?
Pol. You then believe the story
In spite of all—That Victor's coming?
Cha. Coming?
I feel that he is coming—feel the strength
That has upheld me leave me at his coming!
'Twas mine, and now he takes his own again.
Some kinds of strength are well enough to have;
But who's to have that strength? Let my crown go!
I meant to keep it—but I cannot—cannot!
Only he shall not taunt me—he the first—
See if he would not be the first to taunt me
With having left his kingdom all exposed—
With letting it be conquered without stroke—
With . . no—no—'tis no worse than when he left it,
I've just to bid him take it, and, that over,
We fly away—fly—for I loathe this Turin,
This Rivoli, and titles loathe, and state.
We'd best go to your country—unless God
Send I die now.
Pol. Charles, hear me!
Cha. —And again
Shall you be my Polyxena—you'll take me
Out of this woe. Yes, do speak—and keep speaking!

I would not let you speak just now for fear
You'd counsel me against him—but talk, now,
As we two used to talk in blessed times—
Bid me endure all his caprices—take
Me from this post above him !
Pol. I believe
We are undone, but from a different cause :
All your resources, down to the least guard,
Are now at D'Ormea's beck : what if this while
He acts in concert with your father ? We
Indeed were lost. This lonely Rivoli—
Where find a better place for them ?
Cha. [*Pacing the room.*] And why
Does Victor come ? To undo all that's done !
Restore the past—prevent the future ! Seat
Sebastian in your seat and place in mine
. . . Oh, my own people, whom will you find there
To ask of, to consult with, to care for,
To hold up with your hands ? Whom ? One that's false—
False—from the head's crown to the foot's sole, false !
The best is that I knew it in my heart
From the beginning, and expected this,
And hated you, Polyxena, because
You saw thro' him, though I too saw thro' him,
Saw that he meant this while he crowned me, while
He prayed for me,—nay, while he kissed my brow,
I saw—
Pol. But if your measures take effect,
And D'Ormea 's true to you ?
Cha. Then worst of all !
I shall have loosed that callous wretch on him !

Well may the woman taunt him with his child—
I, eating here his bread, clothed in his clothes,
Seated upon his seat, give D'Ormea leave
To outrage him! We talk—perchance they tear
My father from his bed—the old hands feel
For one who is not, but who should be there—
And he finds D'Ormea! D'Ormea, too, finds him!
—The crowded chamber when the lights go out—
Closed doors—the horrid scuffle in the dark—
Th' accursed promptings of the minute! My guards!
To horse—and after, with me—and prevent!

Pol. [*Seizing his hand.*] King Charles! Pause you
upon this strip of time
Allotted you out of eternity!
Crowns are from God—in his name you hold yours.
Your life 's no least thing, were it fit your life
Should be abjured along with rule; but now,
Keep both! Your duty is to live and rule—
You, who would vulgarly look fine enough
In the world's eye deserting your soul's charge,—
Ay, you would have men's tongues—this Rivoli
Would be illumined—while, as 'tis, no doubt,
Something of stain will ever rest on you—
No one will rightly know why you refused
To abdicate—they'll talk of deeds you could
Have done, no doubt,—nor do I much expect
Future achievements will blot out the past,
Envelop it in haze—nor shall we two
Be happy any more; 'twill be, I feel,
Only in moments that the duty's seen
As palpably as now—the months, the years
Of painful indistinctness are to come—

While daily must we tread the palace rooms
Pregnant with memories of the past—your eye
May turn to mine and find no comfort there
Through fancies that beset me as yourself—
Of other courses with far other issues
We might have taken this great night—such bear
As I will bear! What matters happiness?
Duty! There 's man's one moment—this is yours!

[*Putting the crown on his head, and the sceptre in his hand, she places him on his seat: a long pause and silence.*

Enter D'Ormea, *cum suis, and* Victor.

Vic. At last I speak; but once—that once to you.
'Tis you I ask, not these your varletry,
Who 's King of us?

Cha. [*From his seat.*] Count Tende . . .

Vic. What your spies
Assert I ponder in my soul, I say—
Here to your face, amid your guards. I choose
To take again the crown I gave—its shade,
For still its potency surrounds the weak
White locks their felon hands have discomposed.
Or, I'll not ask who 's King, but simply, who
Withholds the crown he claims? Deliver it!
I have no friend in the wide world—nor France
Nor England cares for me—you see the sum
Of what I can avail. Deliver it!

Cha. Take it, my father!
And now say in turn,
Was it done well, my father—sure not well

To try me thus ! I might have seen much cause
For keeping it—too easily seen cause !
But from that moment e'en more woefully
My life had pined away, than pine it will.
Already you have much to answer for.
My life to pine is nothing,—her sunk eyes
Were happy once ! No doubt, my people think
That I'm their King still—but I cannot strive !
Take it !

Vic. [*One hand on the crown* CHARLES *offers, the other on his neck.*] So few years give it quietly,
My son ! It will drop from me. See you not ?
A crown 's unlike a sword to give away—
That, let a strong hand to a weak hand give !
But crowns should slip from palsied brows to heads
Young as this head—yet mine is weak enough,
E'en weaker than I knew. I seek for phrases
To vindicate my right. 'Tis of a piece !
All is alike gone by with me—who beat
Once D'Orleans in his lines—his very lines !
To have been Eugene's comrade, Louis' rival,
And now. . .

Cha. [*Putting the crown on him.*] The King speaks, yet none kneels, I think !

Vic. I am then King ! As I became a King
Despite the nations—kept myself a King—
So I die King, with Kingship dying too
Around me ! I have lasted Europe's time !
What wants my story of completion ? Where
Must needs the damning break show ? Who mistrusts
My children here—tell they of any break
'Twixt my day's sunrise and its fiery fall ?

And who were by me when I died but they?
Who?—D'Ormea there!
Cha. What means he?
Vic. Ever there!
Charles—how to save your story? Mine must go!
Say—say that you refused the crown to me—
Charles, yours shall be my story! You immured
Me, say, at Rivoli. A single year
I spend without a sight of you and die—
That will serve every purpose—tell that tale
The world!
Cha. Mistrusts me? Help!
Vic. Past help, past reach!
'Tis in the heart—you cannot reach the heart:
This broke mine, that I did believe you, Charles,
Would have denied and so disgraced me.
Pol. Charles
Has never ceased to be your subject, sire—
He reigned at first through setting up yourself
As pattern: if he e'er seemed harsh to you,
'Twas from a too intense appreciation
Of your own character: he acted you—
Ne'er for an instant did I think it real,
Or look for any other than this end.
I hold him worlds the worse on that account;
But so it was.
Cha. I love you, now, indeed!
[*To* Victor.] You never knew me!
Vic. Hardly till this moment,
When I seem learning many other things,
Because the time for using them is past.
If 'twere to do again! That's idly wished,

Truthfulness might prove policy as good
As guile. Is this my daughter's forehead? Yes—
I've made it fitter now to be a Queen's
Than formerly—I've ploughed the deep lines there
That keep too well a crown from slipping off!
No matter. Guile has made me King again.
Louis—'twas in King Victor's time—long since,
When Louis reign'd—and, also, Victor reign'd—
How the world talks already of us two!
God of eclipse and each discolour'd star,
Why do I linger then?
Ha! Where lurks he?
D'Ormea! Come nearer to your King! Now stand!
[*Collecting his strength as* D'Ormea *approaches.*
But you lied, D'Ormea! I do not repent. [*Dies.*

DRAMATIC LYRICS.

Dramatic Lyrics.

CAVALIER TUNES.

I.—MARCHING ALONG.

I.

KENTISH Sir Byng stood for his King,
Bidding the crop-headed Parliament swing:
And, pressing a troop unable to stoop
And see the rogues flourish and honest folk droop,
Marched them along, fifty-score strong,
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song.

II.

God for King Charles! Pym and such carles
To the Devil that prompts 'em their treasonous parles!
Cavaliers, up! Lips from the cup,
Hands from the pasty, nor bite take nor sup
Till you're (*Chorus*) *marching along, fifty-score strong,*
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song.

III.

Hampden to Hell, and his obsequies' knell
Serve Rudyard, and Fiennes, and young Harry as well
England, good cheer! Rupert is near!
Kentish and loyalists, keep we not here

(*Cho.*) *Marching along, fifty-score strong,*
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song?

IV.

Then, God for King Charles! Pym and his snarls
To the Devil that pricks on such pestilent carles!
Hold by the right, you double your might;
So, onward to Nottingham, fresh for the fight,
(*Cho.*) *March we along, fifty-score strong,*
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song!

II.—GIVE A ROUSE.

I.

King Charles, and who'll do him right now?
King Charles, and who 's ripe for fight now?
Give a rouse: here 's, in Hell's despite now,
King Charles!

II.

Who gave me the goods that went since?
Who raised me the house that sank once?
Who helped me to gold I spent since?
Who found me in wine you drank once?
(*Cho.*) *King Charles, and who'll do him right now?*
King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now?
Give a rouse: here's, in Hell's despite now,
King Charles!

III.

To whom used my boy George quaff else,
By the old fool's side that begot him?

For whom did he cheer and laugh else,
While Noll's damned troopers shot him?

(*Cho.*) *King Charles, and who'll do him right now?*
King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now?
Give a rouse: here's, in Hell's despite now,
King Charles!

III.—MY WIFE GERTRUDE.

I.

Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!
Rescue my Castle, before the hot day
Brightens to blue from its silvery gray,
(*Cho.*) *Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!*

II.

Ride past the suburbs, asleep as you'd say;
Many's the friend there, will listen and pray
"God's luck to gallants that strike up the lay,
(*Cho.*) "*Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!*"

III.

Forty miles off, like a roebuck at bay,
Flouts Castle Brancepeth the Roundheads' array:
Who laughs, "Good fellows ere this, by my fay,
(*Cho.*) "*Boot, saddle, to horse, and away?*"

IV.

Who? My wife Gertrude; that, honest and gay,
Laughs when you talk of surrendering, "Nay!
"I've better counsellors; what counsel they?
(*Cho.*) "*Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!*"

ITALY AND FRANCE.

I.—ITALY.

That 's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive; I call
That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will 't please you sit and look at her? I said
"Frà Pandolf," by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps
Frà Pandolf chanced to say "Her mantle laps
"Over my Lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
"Must never hope to reproduce the faint
"Half-flush that dies along her throat;" such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart . . how shall I say? . . too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 'twas all one! My favour at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool

Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace—all and each
Would draw from her alike the forward speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men,—good; but thanked
Somehow . . I know not how . . as if she ranked
My gift of a nine hundred years old name
With anybody's gift. Who 'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech—(which I have not)—could make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say "Just this
"Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
"Or there exceed the mark"—and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
—E'en then would be some stooping, and I chuse
Never to stoop. Oh, Sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will 't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below then. I repeat,
The Count your Master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretence
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, Sir! Notice Neptune, tho',
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me.

II.—FRANCE.

I.

Christ God, who savest man, save most
Of men Count Gismond who saved me!
Count Gauthier, when he chose his post,
Chose time and place and company
To suit it; when he struck at length
My honour's face 'twas with full strength.

II.

And doubtlessly ere he could draw
All points to one, he must have schemed!
That miserable morning saw
Few half so happy as I seemed,
While being dressed in Queen's array
To give our Tourney prize away.

III.

I thought all loved me, did me grace
To please themselves; 'twas all their deed;
God makes, or fair or foul, our face;
If showing mine so caused to bleed
My Cousins' hearts, they should have dropped
A word, and all the play had stopped.

IV.

They, too, so beauteous! Each a queen
By virtue of her brow and breast;

Not needing to be crowned, I mean,
As I do. E'en when I was dressed
Had either of them spoke, instead
Of glancing sideways with still head!

V.

But no: they let me laugh, and sing
My birthday song quite through; adjust
The last rose in my garland, fling
A last look on the mirror, trust
My arms to each an arm of theirs,
And so descend the castle-stairs—

VI.

And come out on the morning troop
Of merry friends who kissed my cheek,
And called me Queen, and made me stoop
Under the canopy—(a streak
That pierced it, of the outside sun,
Powdered with gold its gloom's soft dun)—

VII.

And they could let me take my state
And foolish throne amid applause
Of all come there to celebrate
My Queen's day—Oh, I think the cause
Of much was, they forgot no crowd
Makes up for parents in their shroud!

VIII.

Howe'er that be, when eyes were bent
Upon me, both my Cousins cast

Theirs down ; 'twas time I should present
The victor with his . . . there, 'twill last
No long time . . the old mist again
Blinds me . . but the true mist was rain.

IX.

See ! Gismond's at the gate, in talk
With his two boys : I can proceed.
Well, at that moment, who should stalk
Forth calmly (to my face, indeed)
But Gauthier, and he thundered "Stay !"
And all did stay. "No crowns, I say !"

X.

"Bring torches ! Wind the penance-sheet
"About her ! Let her shun the chaste,
"Or lay herself before their feet !
"Shall she, whose body I embraced
"A night long, queen it in the day ?
"For Honour's sake no crowns, I say !"

XI.

I ? What I answered ? As I live,
I never thought there was such thing
As answer possible to give.
What says the body when they spring
Some monstrous torture-engine's whole
Strength on it ? No more says the soul.

XII.

Till out strode Gismond ; then I knew
That I was saved. I never met

His face before, but, at first view,
I felt quite sure that God had set
Himself to Satan; who would spend
A minute's mistrust on the end?

XIII.

He strode to Gauthier, in his throat
Gave him the lie, then struck his mouth
With one back-handed blow that wrote
In blood men's verdict there. North, South,
East, West, I looked. The lie was dead,
And damned, and truth stood up instead.

XIV.

This glads me most, that I enjoyed
The heart of the joy, nor my content
In watching Gismond was alloyed
By any doubt of the event:
God took that on him—me he bid
Watch Gismond for my part: I did.

XV.

Did I not watch him while he let
His armourer just brace his greaves,
Rivet his hauberk, on the fret
The while! His foot . . my memory leaves
No least stamp out, nor how anon
He pulled his ringing gauntlets on.

XVI.

And e'en before the trumpet's sound
Was finished there lay prone the Knight,

Prone as his lie, upon the ground :
My Knight flew at him, used no sleight
Of the sword, but open-breasted drove,
Cleaving till out the truth he clove.

XVII.

Which done, he dragged him to my feet
And said " Here die, but end thy breath
" In full confession, lest thou fleet
" From my first, to God's second death !
"Say, hast thou lied?" And, " I have lied
" To God and her," he said, and died.

XVIII.

Then Gismond, kneeling to me, asked
—What safe my heart holds tho' no word
Could I repeat now, if I tasked
My powers for ever, to a third
Dear even as you are. Pass the rest
Until I sank upon his breast.

XIX.

Over my head his arm he flung
Against the world ; and scarce I felt
His sword, that dripped by me and swung,
A little shifted in its belt,
For he began to say the while
How South our home lay many a mile.

XX.

So 'mid the shouting multitude
We two walked forth to never more

Return. My Cousins have pursued
  Their life untroubled as before
I vexed them. Gauthier's dwelling-place
God lighten ! May his soul find grace !

XXI.

Our elder boy has got the clear
  Great brow ; tho' when his brother's black
Full eye shows scorn, it . . . Gismond here ?
  And have you brought my tercel back ?
I just was telling Adela
How many birds it struck since May.

CAMP AND CLOISTER.

I.—CAMP. (*French.*)

I.

You know we French stormed Ratisbon :
A mile or so away
On a little mound, Napoléon
Stood on our storming-day ;
With neck out-thrust, you fancy how,
Legs wide, arms locked behind,
As if to balance the prone brow
Oppressive with its mind.

II.

Just as perhaps he mused "My plans
"That soar, to earth may fall
"Let once my army-leader Lannes
"Waver at yonder wall."
Out 'twixt the battery-smokes there flew
A rider, bound on bound
Full-galloping ; nor bridle drew
Until he reached the mound.

III.

Then off there flung in smiling joy,
And held himself erect
By just his horse's mane, a boy :
You hardly could suspect—
(So tight he kept his lips compressed
Scarce any blood came thro')

You looked twice ere you saw his breast
Was all but shot in two.

IV.

"Well," cried he, "Emperor, by God's grace
"We've got you Ratisbon!
"The Marshal's in the market-place,
"And you'll be there anon
"To see your flag-bird flap his vans
"Where I, to heart's desire,
"Perched him!" The Chief's eye flashed; his plans
Soared up again like fire.

V.

The Chief's eye flashed; but presently
Softened itself, as sheathes
A film the mother eagle's eye
When her bruised eaglet breathes:
"You're wounded!" "Nay," his soldier's pride
Touched to the quick, he said:
"I'm killed, Sire!" And, his Chief beside,
Smiling the boy fell dead.

II.—CLOISTER. (*Spanish.*)

I.

Gr-r-r—there go, my heart's abhorrence!
Water your damned flower-pots, do!
If hate killed men, Brother Lawrence,
God's blood, would not mine kill you!

What? your myrtle-bush wants trimming?
Oh, that rose has prior claims—
Needs its leaden vase filled brimming?
Hell dry you up with its flames!

II.

At the meal we sit together:
Salve tibi! I must hear
Wise talk of the kind of weather
Sort of season, time of year:
Not a plenteous cork-crop: scarcely
Dare we hope oak-galls, I doubt:
What's the Latin name for "parsley"?
What's the Greek name for Swine's Snout?

III

Phew! We'll have our platter burnished,
Laid with care on our own shelf!
With a fire-new spoon we're furnished,
And a goblet for ourself,
Rinsed like something sacrificial
Ere 'tis fit to touch our chaps—
Marked with L. for our initial!
(He, he! There his lily snaps!)

IV.

Saint, forsooth! While brown Dolores
Squats outside the Convent bank,
With Sanchicha, telling stories,
Steeping tresses in the tank,
Blue-black, lustrous, thick like horsehairs
—Can't I see his dead eye grow

Bright, as 'twere a Barbary corsair's?
That is, if he'd let it show.

V.

When he finishes refection,
Knife and fork across he lays
Never, to my recollection,
As do I, in Jesu's praise.
I, the Trinity illustrate,
Drinking watered orange-pulp;
In three sips the Arian frustrate;
While he drains his at one gulp!

VI.

Oh, those melons! If he's able
We're to have a feast; so nice!
One goes to the Abbot's table,
All of us get each a slice.
How go on your flowers? None double?
Not one fruit-sort can you spy?
Strange!—And I, too, at such trouble,
Keep 'em close-nipped on the sly!

VII.

There's a great text in Galatians,
Once you trip on it, entails
Twenty-nine distinct damnations,
One sure, if another fails.
If I trip him just a-dying,
Sure of Heaven as sure can be,
Spin him round and send him flying
Off to Hell a Manichee?

VIII.

Or, my scrofulous French novel,
On grey paper with blunt type!
Simply glance at it, you grovel
Hand and foot in Belial's gripe.
If I double down its pages
At the woeful sixteenth print,
When he gathers his greengages,
Ope a sieve and slip it in't?

IX.

Or, the Devil!—one might venture
Pledge one's soul yet slily leave
Such a flaw in the indenture
As he'd miss till, past retrieve,
Blasted lay that rose-acacia
We're so proud of! *Hy, Zy, Hine* . . .
St, there's Vespers! *Plena gratiâ*
Ave, Virgo! Gr-r-r—you swine!

IN A GONDOLA.

I.

I SEND my heart up to thee, all my heart
In this my singing!
For the stars help me, and the sea bears part;
The very night is clinging
Closer to Venice' streets to leave one space
Above me, whence thy face
May light my joyous heart to thee its dwelling-place.

II.

Say after me, and try to say
My words as if each word
Came from you of your own accord,
In your own voice, in your own way:
This woman's heart, and soul, and brain
Are mine as much as this gold chain
She bids me wear; which (say again)
I choose to make by cherishing
A precious thing, or choose to fling
Over the boat-side, ring by ring;
And yet once more say . . . no word more!—
Since words are only words. Give o'er!
Unless you call me, all the same,
Familiarly by my pet-name
Which if the Three should hear you call
And me reply to, would proclaim
At once our secret to them all:

Ask of me, too, command me, blame—
Do break down the partition-wall
'Twixt us the daylight world beholds
Curtained in dusk and splendid folds.

III.

What 's left but—all of me to take?
I am the Three's, prevent them, slake
Your thirst! 'Tis said the Arab sage
In practising with gems can loose
Their subtle spirit in his cruce
And leave but ashes: so, sweet mage,
Leave them my ashes when thy use
Sucks out my soul, thy heritage!

IV.

1.

Past we glide, and past, and past!
What 's that poor Agnese doing
Where they make the shutters fast?
Grey Zanobi's just a-wooing
To his couch the purchased bride:
Past we glide!

2.

Past we glide, and past, and past!
Why 's the Pucci Palace flaring
Like a beacon to the blast?
Guests by hundreds—not one caring
If the dear host's neck were wried:
Past we glide!

V.

1.

The Moth's kiss, first!
Kiss me as if you made believe
You were not sure this eve,
How my face, your flower, had pursed
Its petals up; so here and there
Brush it, till I grow aware
Who wants me, and wide ope I burst.

2.

The Bee's kiss, now!
Kiss me as if you entered gay
My heart at some noonday,
A bud that dares not disallow
The claim, so all is rendered up,
And passively its shattered cup
Over your head to sleep I bow.

VI.

1.

What are we two?
I am a Jew,
And carry thee, farther than friends can pursue,
To a feast of our tribe,
Where they need thee to bribe
The devil that blasts them unless he imbibe
Thy . . . Shatter the vision for ever! And now,
As of old, I am I, Thou art Thou!

2.

But again, what we are?
The sprite of a star,

I lure thee above where the Destinies bar
My plumes their full play
Till a ruddier ray
Than my pale one announce there is withering away
Some . . . Scatter the vision for ever! And now,
As of old, I am I, Thou art Thou!

VII.

Oh, which were best, to roam or rest?
The land's lap or the water's breast?
To sleep on yellow millet-sheaves,
Or swim in lucid shallows, just
Eluding water-lily leaves,
An inch from Death's black fingers, thrust
To lock you, whom release he must;
Which life were best on Summer eves?

VIII.

Lie back; could I improve you?
From this shoulder let there spring
A wing; from this, another wing;
Wings, not legs and feet, shall move you!
Snow-white must they spring, to blend
With your flesh, but I intend
They shall deepen to the end,
Broader, into burning gold,
Till both wings crescent-wise enfold
Your perfect self, from 'neath your feet
To o'er your head, where, lo, they meet
As if a million sword-blades hurled
Defiance from you to the world!

Rescue me thou, the only real!
And scare away this mad Ideal
That came, nor motions to depart!
Thanks! Now, stay ever as thou art!

IX.

1.

He and the Couple catch at last
Thy serenader; while there's cast
Paul's cloak about my head, and fast
Gian pinions me, Himself has past
His stylet thro' my back; I reel;
And . . . is it Thee I feel?

2.

They trail me, do these godless knaves,
Past every church that sains and saves,
Nor stop till, where the cold sea raves
By Lido's wet accursed graves,
They scoop mine, roll me to its brink,
And . . . on Thy breast I sink!

X.

Dip your arm o'er the boat-side elbow-deep
As I do: thus: were Death so unlike Sleep
Caught this way? Death's to fear from flame or steel
Or poison doubtless, but from water—feel!

Go find the bottom! Would you stay me? There!
Now pluck a great blade of that ribbon-grass
To plait in where the foolish jewel was,
I flung away: since you have praised my hair
'Tis proper to be choice in what I wear.

XI.

Must we, must we *Home?* Too surely
Know I where its front's demurely
Over the Giudecca piled;
Window just with window mating,
Door on door exactly waiting,
All 's the set face of a child:
But behind it, where's a trace
Of the staidness and reserve,
Formal lines without a curve,
In the same child's playing-face?
No two windows look one way
O'er the small sea-water thread
Below them. Ah, the autumn day
I, passing, saw you overhead!
First out a cloud of curtain blew,
Then, a sweet cry, and last came you—
To catch your loory that must needs
Escape just then, of all times then,
To peck a tall plant's fleecy seeds,
And make me happiest of men.
I scarce could breathe to see you reach
So far back o'er the balcony,
To catch him ere he climbed too high
Above you in the Smyrna peach,
That quick the round smooth cord of gold,
This coiled hair on your head, unrolled,
Fell down you like a gorgeous snake
The Roman girls were wont, of old
When Rome there was, for coolness' sake
To place within their bosoms.
Dear loory, may his beak retain

Ever its delicate rose stain
As if the wounded lotus-blossoms
Marked their thief to know again!

XII.

Stay longer yet, for others' sake
Than mine! what should your chamber do?
—With all its rarities that ache
In silence while day lasts, but wake
At night-time and their life renew,
Suspended just to pleasure you
That brought reluctantly together
These objects and, while day lasts, weave
Round them such a magic tether
That dumb they look: your harp, believe,
With all the sensitive tight strings
That dare not speak, now to itself
Breathes slumbrously as if some elf
Went in and out tall chords his wings
Get murmurs from whene'er they graze,
As may an angel thro' the maze
Of pillars on God's quest have gone
At guilty glorious Babylon.
And while such murmurs flow, the nymph
Bends o'er the harp-top from her shell,
As the dry limpet for the lymph
Come with a tune he knows so well.
And how the statues' hearts must swell!
And how the pictures must descend
To see each other, friend with friend!
Oh, could you take them by surprise,
You'd find Schidone's eager Duke

Doing the quaintest courtesies
To that prim Saint by Haste-thee-Luke :
And deeper into her rock den
Bold Castelfranco's Magdalen
You'd find retreated from the ken
Of that robed counsel-keeping Ser—
As if the Tizian thinks of her !
As if he is not rather bent
On trying for himself what toys
Are these his progeny invent,
What litter now the board employs
Whereon he signed a document
That got him murdered ! Each enjoys
Its night so well, you cannot break
The sport up, so, for others' sake
Than mine, your stay must longer make !

XIII.

1.

To-morrow, if a harp-string, say,
Is used to tie the jasmine back
That overfloods my room with sweets,
Be sure that Zorzi somehow meets
My Zanze : if the ribbon 's black
I use, they're watching ; keep away.

2.

Your gondola—let Zorzi wreathe
A mesh of water-weeds about
Its prow, as if he unaware
Had struck some quay or bridge-foot stair ;
That I may throw a paper out
As you and he go underneath.

XIV.

There 's Zanze's vigilant taper; safe are we!
Only one minute more to-night with me?
Resume your past self of a month ago!
Be you the bashful gallant, I will be
The lady with the colder breast than snow:
Now bow you, as becomes, nor touch my hand
More than I touch yours when I step to land,
And say, All thanks, Siora . . .
Heart to heart
And lips to lips! Once, ere we part,
Make me thine as mine thou art!

XV.

It was to be so, Sweet, and best
Comes 'neath thine eyes, and on thy breast.
Still kiss me! Care not for the cowards! Care
Only to put aside thy beauteous hair
My blood will hurt. The Three I do not scorn
To death, because they never lived: but I
Have lived indeed, and so—(yet one more kiss)—can
die.

ARTEMIS PROLOGUIZES.

I AM a Goddess of the ambrosial courts,
And save by Here, Queen of Pride, surpassed
By none whose temples whiten this the world.
Thro' Heaven I roll its lucid moon along ;
In Hades shed o'er my pale people peace ;
On Earth, I, caring for the creatures, guard
Each pregnant yellow wolf and fox-bitch sleek,
And every feathered mother's callow brood,
And all that love green haunts and loneliness.
Of men, the chaste adore me, hanging crowns
Of poppies red to blackness, bell and stem,
Upon my image at Athenai here ;
Of such this Youth, Asclepios bends above,
Was dearest to me, and my buskined step
To follow thro' the wild-wood leafy ways,
And chase the panting stag, or swift with darts
Stop the swift ounce, or lay the leopard low,
He paid not homage to another God :
Whence Aphrodite, by no midnight smoke
Of tapers lulled, in jealousy despatched
A noisome lust that, as the gadbee stings,
Possessed his stepdame Phaidra for the child
Of Theseus her great husband then afar.
But when Hippolutos exclaimed with rage
Against the miserable Queen, she judged
Intolerable life, and, pricked at heart
An Amazonian stranger's race had right
To scorn her, perished by the murderous cord :

Yet, ere she perished, blasted in a scroll
The fame of him her swerving made not swerve,
Which Theseus saw, returning, and believed,
So, in the blindness of his wrath, exiled
The man without a crime, who, last as first,
Loyal, divulged not to his sire the truth.
But Theseus from Poseidon had obtained
That of his wishes should be granted Three,
And this one imprecated now—alive
May ne'er Hippolutos reach other lands!
Poseidon heard, ai ai! And scarce the prince
Had stepped into the fixed boots of the car,
That give the feet a stay against the strength
Of the Henetian horses, and around
His body flung the reins, and urged their speed
Along the rocks and shingles of the shore,
When from the gaping wave a monster flung
His obscene body in the coursers' path:
These, mad with terror as the sea-bull sprawled
Wallowing about their feet, lost care of him
That reared them; and the master-chariot-pole
Snapping beneath their plunges like a reed,
Hippolutos, whose feet were trammelled sure,
Was yet dragged forward by the circling rein
Which either hand directed; nor they quenched
The frenzy of their flight before each trace,
Wheel-spoke and splinter of the woeful car,
And boulder-stone, sharp stub, and spiny shell,
Huge fish-bone wrecked and wreathed amid the sands
On that detested beach, was bright with blood
And morsels of his flesh: then fell the steeds
Head-foremost, crashing in their mooned fronts,

Shivering with sweat, each white eye horror fixed.
His people, who had witnessed all afar,
Bore back the ruins of Hippolutos.
But when his sire, too swoln with pride, rejoiced,
Indomitable as a man foredoomed,
That vast Poseidon had fulfilled his prayer,
I, in a flood of glory visible,
Stood o'er my dying votary, and deed
By deed revealed, as all took place, the truth.
Then Theseus lay the woefullest of men,
And worthily; but ere the death-veils hid
His face, the murdered prince full pardon breathed
To his rash sire. Whence now Athenai wails.
But I, who ne'er forsake my votaries,
Lest in the cross-way none the honey-cake
Should tender, nor pour out the dog's hot life;
Lest at my fane disconsolate the priests
Should dress my image with some faded poor
Few crowns, made favours of, nor dare object
Such slackness to my worshippers who turn
Elsewhere the trusting heart and loaded hand,
As they had climbed Olumpos to report
Of Artemis and nowhere found her throne—
I interposed: and, this eventful night,
While round the funeral pyre the populace
Stand with fierce light on their black robes that blind
Each sobbing head, while yet their hair they clip
O'er the dead body of their withered prince,
And, in his palace, Theseus prostrated
On the cold hearth, his brow cold as the slab
'Tis bruised on, groans away the heavy grief—
As the pyre fell, and down the cross logs crashed,

Sending a crowd of sparkles thro' the night,
And the gay fire, elate with mastery,
Towered like a serpent o'er the clotted jars
Of wine, dissolving oils and frankincense,
And splendid gums like gold,—my potency
Conveyed the perished man to my retreat
In the thrice venerable forest here.
And this white-bearded Sage who squeezes now
The berried plant is Phoibos' son of fame,
Asclepios, whom my radiant brother taught
The doctrine of each herb and flower and root,
To know their secret'st virtue and express
The saving soul of all—who so has soothed
With lavers the torn brow and murdered cheeks,
Composed the hair and brought its gloss again,
And called the red bloom to the pale skin back,
And laid the strips and jagged ends of flesh
Even once more, and slacked the sinew's knot
Of every tortured limb—that now he lies
As if mere sleep possessed him underneath
These interwoven oaks and pines. Oh, cheer,
Divine presenter of the healing rod
Thy snake, with ardent throat and lulling eye,
Twines his lithe spires around! I say, much cheer!
Proceed thou with thy wisest pharmacies!
And ye, white crowd of woodland sister-nymphs,
Ply, as the Sage directs, these buds and leaves
That strew the turf around the Twain! While I
In fitting silence the event await.

WARING.

I.

I.

What 's become of Waring
Since he gave us all the slip,
Chose land-travel or seafaring,
Boots and chest, or staff and scrip,
Rather than pace up and down
Any longer London-town?

II.

Who'd have guessed it from his lip,
Or his brow's accustomed bearing,
On the night he thus took ship,
Or started landward, little caring
For us, it seems, who supped together,
(Friends of his too, I remember)
And walked home thro' the merry weather,
Snowiest in all December;
I left his arm that night myself
For what 's-his-name's, the new prose-poet,
That wrote the book there, on the shelf—
How, forsooth, was I to know it
If Waring meant to glide away
Like a ghost at break of day!
Never looked he half so gay!

III.

He was prouder than the Devil:
How he must have cursed our revel!

Ay, and many other meetings,
Indoor visits, outdoor greetings,
As up and down he paced this London,
With no work done, but great works undone,
Where scarce twenty knew his name.
Why not, then, have earlier spoken,
Written, bustled? Who 's to blame
If your silence kept unbroken?
True, but there were sundry jottings,
Stray-leaves, fragments, blurrs and blottings,
Certain first-steps were achieved
Already which—(is that your meaning?)
Had well borne out whoe'er believed
In more to come: but who goes gleaning
Hedge-side chance-blades, while full-sheaved
Stand cornfields by him? Pride, o'erweening
Pride alone, puts forth such claims
O'er the day's distinguished names.

IV.

Meantime, how much I loved him,
I find out now I've lost him:
I, who cared not if I moved him,
—Could so carelessly accost him,
Never shall get free
Of his ghostly company,
And eyes that just a little wink
As deep I go into the merit
Of this and that distinguished spirit—
His cheeks' raised colour, soon to sink,
As long I dwell on some stupendous
And tremendous (God defend us!)

Monstr'-inform'-ingens-horrend-ous
Demoniaco-seraphic
Penman's latest piece of graphic.
Nay, my very wrist grows warm
With his dragging weight of arm !
E'en so, swimmingly appears,
Thro' one's after-supper musings,
Some lost Lady of old years,
With her beauteous vain endeavour,
And goodness unrepaid as ever ;
The face, accustomed to refusings,
We, puppies that we were . . . Oh never
Surely, nice of conscience, scrupled
Being aught like false, forsooth, to ?
Telling aught but honest truth to ?
What a sin had we centupled
Its possessor's grace and sweetness !
No ! she heard in its completeness
Truth, for truth 's a weighty matter,
And, truth at issue, we can't flatter !
Well, 'tis done with : she 's exempt
From damning us thro' such a sally ;
And so she glides, as down a valley,
Taking up with her contempt,
Past our reach ; and in, the flowers
Shut her unregarded hours.

v.

Oh, could I have him back once more,
This Waring, but one half-day more !
Back, with the quiet face of yore,
So hungry for acknowledgment

Like mine! I'd fool him to his bent!
Feed, should not he, to heart's content?
I'd say, "to only have conceived
"Your great works, tho' they never progress,
"Surpasses all we've yet achieved!"
I'd lie so, I should be believed.
I'd make such havoc of the claims
Of the day's distinguished names
To feast him with, as feasts an ogress
Her sharp-toothed golden-crowned child!
Or, as one feasts a creature rarely
Captured here, unreconciled
To capture; and completely gives
Its pettish humours licence, barely
Requiring that it lives.

VI.

Ichabod, Ichabod,
The glory is departed!
Travels Waring East away?
Who, of knowledge, by hearsay,
Reports a man upstarted
Somewhere as a God,
Hordes grown European-hearted,
Millions of the wild made tame
On a sudden at his fame?
In Vishnu-land what Avatar?
Or, North in Moscow, toward the Czar,
Who, with the gentlest of footfalls
Over the Kremlin's pavement, bright
With serpentine and siennite,
Steps, with five other Generals,

Who simultaneously take snuff,
That each may have pretext enough
To kerchiefwise unfurl his sash
Which, softness' self, is yet the stuff
To hold fast where a steel chain snaps,
And leave the grand white neck no gash?
In Moscow, Waring, to those rough
Cold natures borne, perhaps,
Like the lambwhite maiden, (clear
Thro' the circle of mute kings,
Unable to repress the tear,
Each as his sceptre down he flings),
To the Dome at Taurica,
Where now a priestess, she alway
Mingles her tender grave Hellenic speech
With theirs, tuned to the hailstone-beaten beach,
As pours some pigeon, from the myrrhy lands
Rapt by the whirlblast to fierce Scythian strands
Where breed the swallows, her melodious cry
Amid their barbarous twitter!
In Russia? Never! Spain were fitter!
Ay, most likely 'tis in Spain
That we and Waring meet again—
Now, while he turns down that cool narrow lane
Into the blackness, out of grave Madrid
All fire and shine—abrupt as when there 's slid
Its stiff gold blazing pall
From some black coffin-lid.
Or, best of all,
I love to think
The leaving us was just a feint;
Back here to London did he slink;

And now works on without a wink
Of sleep, and we are on the brink
Of something great in fresco-paint:
Some garret's ceiling, walls and floor,
Up and down and o'er and o'er
He splashes, as none splashed before
Since great Caldara Polidore:
Then down he creeps and out he steals
Only when the night conceals
His face—in Kent 'tis cherry-time,
Or, hops are picking; or, at prime
Of March, he steals as when, too happy,
Years ago when he was young,
Some mild eve when woods were sappy,
And the early moths had sprung
To life from many a trembling sheath
Woven the warm boughs beneath,
While small birds said to themselves
What should soon be actual song,
And young gnats, by tens and twelves,
Made as if they were the throng
That crowd around and carry aloft
The sound they have nursed, so sweet and pure,
Out of a myriad noises soft,
Into a tone that can endure
Amid the noise of a July noon,
When all God's creatures crave their boon,
All at once and all in tune,
And get it, happy as Waring then,
Having first within his ken
What a man might do with men,
And far too glad, in the even-glow,

To mix with the world he meant to take
Into his hand, he told you, so—
And out of it his world to make,
To contract and to expand
As he shut or oped his hand.
Oh, Waring, what 's to really be?
A clear stage and a crowd to see!
Some Garrick—say—out shall not he
The heart of Hamlet's mystery pluck?
Or, where most unclean beasts are rife,
Some Junius—am I right?—shall tuck
His sleeve, and out with flaying-knife!
Some Chatterton shall have the luck
Of calling Rowley into life!
Some one shall somehow run a muck
With this old world, for want of strife
Sound asleep: contrive, contrive
To rouse us, Waring! Who 's alive?
Our men scarce seem in earnest now:
Distinguished names, but 'tis, somehow,
As if they played at being names
Still more distinguished, like the games
Of children. Turn our sport to earnest
With a visage of the sternest!
Bring the real times back, confessed
Still better than the very best!

II.

I.

"When I last saw Waring . . ."
(How all turned to him who spoke—
You saw Waring? Truth or joke?
In land-travel, or sea-faring?)

II.

"We were sailing by Triest,
"Where a day or two we harboured:
"A sunset was in the West,
"When, looking over the vessel's side,
"One of our company espied
"A sudden speck to larboard.
"And, as a sea-duck flies and swims
"At once, so came the light craft up,
"With its sole lateen sail that trims
"And turns (the water round its rims
"Dancing as round a sinking cup)
"And by us like a fish it curled,
"And drew itself up close beside,
"Its great sail on the instant furled,
"And o'er its planks, a shrill voice cried,
"(A neck as bronzed as a Lascar's)
"'Buy wine of us, you English Brig?
"'Or fruit, tobacco and cigars?
"'A Pilot for you to Triest?
"'Without one, look you ne'er so big,
"'They'll never let you up the bay!
"'We natives should know best.'
"I turned, and 'just those fellows' way,'

"Our captain said, 'The 'long-shore thieves,
"Are laughing at us in their sleeves.'

III.

"In truth, the boy leaned laughing back;
"And one, half-hidden by his side
"Under the furled sail, soon I spied,
"With great grass hat, and kerchief black,
"Who looked up, with his kingly throat,
"Said somewhat while the other shook
"His hair back from his eyes to look
"Their longest at us; and the boat,
"I know not how, turned sharply round,
"Laying her whole side on the sea
"As a leaping fish does; from the lee
"Into the weather cut somehow
"Her sparkling path beneath our bow;
"And so went off, as with a bound,
"Into the rose and golden half
"Of the sky, to overtake the sun,
"And reach the shore like the sea-calf
"Its singing cave; yet I caught one
"Glance ere away the boat quite passed,
"And neither time nor toil could mar
"Those features: so I saw the last
"Of Waring!"—You? Oh, never star
Was lost here, but it rose afar!
Look East, where whole new thousands are!
In Vishnu-land what Avatar?

QUEEN-WORSHIP.

I.—RUDEL AND THE LADY OF TRIPOLI.

I.

I KNOW a Mount the Sun perceives
First when he visits, last, too, when he leaves
The world; and it repays
The day-long glory of his gaze
By no change of its large calm steadfast front of snow.
A Flower I know,
He cannot have perceived, that changes ever
At his approach, and in the lost endeavour
To live his life has parted, one by one,
With all a flower's true graces, for the grace
Of being but a foolish mimic sun,
With ray-like florets round a disk-like face.
Men nobly call by many a name the Mount,
As over many a land of theirs its large
Calm steadfast front, like a triumphal targe
Is reared, and still with old names, fresh ones vie,
Each to its proper praise and own account:
Men call the Flower, the Sunflower, sportively,

II.

Oh, Angel of the East, one, one gold look
Across the waters to this twilight nook,
—The far sad waters, Angel, to this nook!

III.

Dear Pilgrim, art thou for the East indeed?
Go! Saying ever as thou dost proceed

That I, French Rudel, choose for my device
A sunflower outspread like a sacrifice
Before its idol: see! These inexpert
And hurried fingers could not fail to hurt
The woven picture; 'tis a woman's skill
Indeed; but nothing baffled me, so, ill
Or well, the work is finished. Say, men feed
On songs I sing, and therefore bask the bees
On the flower's breast as on a platform broad:
But, as the flower's concern is not for these
But solely for the sun, so men applaud
In vain this Rudel, he not looking here
But to the East—the East! Go, say this, Pilgrim dear!

II.—CRISTINA.

I.

She should not have looked at me,
If she meant I should not love her:
There 's plenty . . men, you call such,
I suppose . . she may discover
All her soul to, if she pleases,
And yet leave much as she found them.
But I'm not so, and she knew it
When she fixed me, glancing round them.

II.

What? To fix me thus meant nothing?
But I can't tell . . . there 's my weakness . .
What her look said: no vile cant, sure,
About "need to strew the bleakness

"Of some lone shore with its pearl-seed
"That the Sea feels"—no "strange yearning
"That such souls have, most to lavish
"Where there's chance of least returning."

III.

Oh, we're sunk enough here, God knows!
But not quite so sunk that moments,
Sure tho' seldom, are denied us,
When the spirit's true endowments
Stand plain out from its false ones,
And apprise it if pursuing
The right way or the wrong way,
To its triumph or undoing.

IV.

There are flashes struck from midnights,
There are fire-flames noondays kindle,
Whereby piled-up honours perish,
Whereby swoln ambitions dwindle,
While this or that poor impulse,
Which for once had play unstifled,
Seems the sole work of a life-time
Away the rest have trifled.

V.

Doubt you if, in some such moment,
As she fixed me, she felt clearly,
Ages past the soul existed,
Here an age 'tis resting merely,
Hence, fleets again for ages:
And the true end, sole and single,

It stops here for is, this love-way,
With some other soul to mingle?

VI.

Else it loses what it lived for,
And eternally must lose it;
Better ends may be in prospect,
Deeper blisses, if you choose it,
But this life's end and this love-bliss
Have been lost here. Doubt you whether
This she felt, as, looking at me,
Mine and her souls rushed together?

VII.

Oh, observe! Of course, next moment,
The world's honours, in derision,
Trampled out the light for ever:
Never fear but there 's provision
Of the Devil's to quench knowledge
Lest we walk the earth in rapture!
Making those who catch the secret
Just so much more prize their capture.

VIII.

Such am I: the secret 's mine now!
She has lost me—I have gained her
Her soul 's mine: and, thus, grown perfect,
I shall pass my life's remainder,
That just holds out the proving
Our powers, alone and blended—
And then, come next life quickly,
This life will have been ended!

MADHOUSE CELLS.

I.

THERE 's Heaven above, and night by night,
I look right through its gorgeous roof;
No suns and moons though e'er so bright
Avail to stop me; splendour-proof
I keep the broods of stars aloof:
For I intend to get to God,
For 'tis to God I speed so fast,
For in God's breast, my own abode,
Those shoals of dazzling glory past,
I lay my spirit down at last.
I lie where I have always lain,
God smiles as he has always smiled;
Ere suns and moons could wax and wane,
Ere stars were thundergirt, or piled
The Heavens, God thought on me his child,
Ordained a life for me, arrayed
Its circumstances, every one
To the minutest; ay, God said
This head this hand should rest upon
Thus, ere he fashioned star or sun.
And having thus created me,
Thus rooted me, he bade me grow
Guiltless for ever, like a tree
That buds and blooms, nor seeks to know
A law by which it prospers so:
But sure that thought and word and deed
All go to swell his love for me,
Me made because that love had need

Of something irrevocably
Pledged solely its content to be.
Yes, yes, a tree which must ascend,
No poison-gourd foredoomed to stoop!
I have God's warrant, could I blend
All hideous sins, as in a cup,
To drink the mingled venoms up,
Secure my nature will convert
The draught to blossoming gladness fast,
While sweet dews turn to the gourd's hurt,
And bloat, and while they bloat it, blast,
As from the first its lot was cast.
For as I lie, smiled on, full fed
By unexhausted power to bless,
I gaze below on Hell's fierce bed,
And those its waves of flame oppress,
Swarming in ghastly wretchedness,
Whose life on earth aspired to be
One altar-smoke, so pure!—to win
If not love like God's love to me,
At least to keep his anger in,
And all their striving turned to sin!
Priest, doctor, hermit, monk grown white
With prayer, the broken-hearted nun,
The martyr, the wan acolyte,
The incense-swinging child,—undone
Before God fashioned star or sun!
God, whom I praise; how could I praise
If such as I might understand,
Make out, and reckon on, his ways,
And bargain for his love, and stand,
Paying a price, at his right hand?

II.

THE rain set early in to-night,
The sullen wind was soon awake,
It tore the elm-tops down for spite,
And did its worst to vex the lake,
I listened with heart fit to break,
When glided in Porphyria: straight
She shut the cold out and the storm,
And kneeled and made the cheerless grate
Blaze up, and all the cottage warm;
Which done, she rose, and from her form
Withdrew the dripping cloak and shawl,
And laid her soiled gloves by, untied
Her hat and let the damp hair fall,
And, last, she sate down by my side
And called me. When no voice replied,
She put my arm about her waist,
And made her smooth white shoulder bare,
And all her yellow hair displaced,
And, stooping, made my cheek lie there,
And spread o'er all her yellow hair,
Murmuring how she loved me; she
Too weak, for all her heart's endeavour,
To set its struggling passion free
From pride, and vainer ties dissever,
And give herself to me for ever:
But passion sometimes would prevail,
Nor could to-night's gay feast restrain
A sudden thought of one so pale
For love of her, and all in vain;
And she was come through wind and rain.
Be sure I looked up at her eyes

Proud, very proud; at last I knew
Porphyria worshipped me; surprise
Made my heart swell, and still it grew
While I debated what to do.
That moment she was mine, mine, fair,
Perfectly pure and good: I found
A thing to do, and all her hair
In one long yellow string I wound
Three times her little throat around,
And strangled her. No pain felt she:
I am quite sure she felt no pain.
As a shut bud that holds a bee
I warily oped her lids; again
Laughed the blue eyes without a stain.
And I untightened next the tress
About her neck; her cheek once more
Blushed bright beneath my burning kiss:
I propped her head up as before,
Only, this time my shoulder bore
Her head, which droops upon it still:
The smiling rosy little head,
So glad it has its utmost will,
That all it scorned at once is fled,
And I, its love, am gained instead!
Porphyria's love: she guessed not how
Her darling one wish would be heard.
And thus we sit together now,
And all night long we have not stirred,
And yet God has not said a word!

THROUGH THE METIDJA TO ABD-EL-KADR.—1842.

I.

As I ride, as I ride,
With a full heart for my guide,
So its tide rocks my side,
As I ride, as I ride,
That, as I were double-eyed,
He, in whom our Tribes confide,
Is descried, ways untried
As I ride, as I ride.

II.

As I ride, as I ride
To our Chief and his Allied,
Who dares chide my heart's pride
As I ride, as I ride?
Or are witnesses denied—
Through the desert waste and wide
Do I glide unespied
As I ride, as I ride?

III.

As I ride, as I ride,
When an inner voice has cried,
The sands slide, nor abide
(As I ride, as I ride)
O'er each visioned Homicide
That came vaunting (has he lied?)

To abide—where he died
As I ride, as I ride.

IV.

As I ride, as I ride,
Ne'er has spur my swift horse plied,
Yet his hide, streaked and pied,
As I ride, as I ride,
Shows where sweat has sprung and dried,
—Zebra-footed, ostrich-thighed—
How has vied stride with stride
As I ride, as I ride!

V.

As I ride, as I ride,
Could I loose what Fate has tied,
Ere I pried, she should hide
As I ride, as I ride,
All that 's meant me: satisfied
When the Prophet and the Bride
Stop veins I'd have subside
As I ride, as I ride!

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN;

A CHILD'S STORY.

(*Written for, and inscribed to, W. M. the Younger.*)

I.

Hamelin Town's in Brunswick,
By famous Hanover city;
The river Weser, deep and wide,
Washes its wall on the southern side;
A pleasanter spot you never spied;
But, when begins my ditty,
Almost five hundred years ago,
To see the townsfolk suffer so
From vermin, 'twas a pity.

II.

Rats!
They fought the dogs, and killed the cats,
And bit the babies in the cradles,
And eat the cheeses out of the vats,
And licked the soup from the cooks' own ladles,
Split open the kegs of salted sprats,
Made nest's inside men's Sunday hats,
And even spoiled the women's chats,
By drowning their speaking
With shrieking and squeaking
In fifty different sharps and flats.

III.

At last the people in a body
To the Town Hall came flocking:

'Tis clear, cried they, our Mayor's a noddy;
And as for our Corporation—shocking
To think we buy gowns lined with ermine
For dolts that can't or won't determine
What's like to rid us of our vermin!
Rouse up, Sirs! Give your brains a racking
To find the remedy we're lacking,
Or, sure as fate, we'll send you packing!
At this the Mayor and Corporation
Quaked with a mighty consternation.

IV.

An hour they sate in council,
At length the Mayor broke silence:
For a guilder I'd my ermine gown sell;
I wish I were a mile hence!
It's easy to bid one rack one's brain—
I'm sure my poor head aches again
I've scratched it so, and all in vain.
Oh for a trap, a trap, a trap!
Just as he said this, what should hap
At the chamber door but a gentle tap?
Bless us, cried the Mayor, what's that?
(With the Corporation as he sate,
Looking little though wondrous fat)
Only a scraping of shoes on the mat?
Any thing like the sound of a rat
Makes my heart go pit-a-pat!

V.

Come in!—the Mayor cried, looking bigger:
And in did come the strangest figure!
His queer long coat from heel to head

Was half of yellow and half of red ;
And he himself was tall and thin,
With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin,
And light loose hair, yet swarthy skin,
No tuft on cheek nor beard on chin,
But lips where smiles went out and in—
There was no guessing his kith and kin !
And nobody could enough admire
The tall man and his quaint attire :
Quoth one : It 's as my great-grandsire,
Starting up at the Trump of Doom's tone,
Had walked this way from his painted tomb-stone !

VI.

He advanced to the council-table :
And, Please your honours, said he, I'm able,
By means of a secret charm, to draw
All creatures living beneath the sun,
That creep, or swim, or fly, or run,
After me so as you never saw !
And I chiefly use my charm
On creatures that do people harm,
The mole, and toad, and newt, and viper ;
And people call me the Pied Piper.
(And here they noticed round his neck
A scarf of red and yellow stripe,
To match with his coat of the self same cheque ;
And at the scarf's end hung a pipe ;
And his fingers, they noticed, were ever straying
As if impatient to be playing
Upon this pipe, as low it dangled
Over his vesture so old-fangled.)

Yet, said he, poor piper as I am,
In Tartary I freed the Cham,
Last June, from his huge swarms of gnats;
I eased in Asia the Nizam
Of a monstrous brood of vampyre-bats:
And, as for what your brain bewilders,
If I can rid your town of rats
Will you give me a thousand guilders?
One? fifty thousand!—was the exclamation
Of the astonished Mayor and Corporation.

VII.

Into the street the Piper stept,
Smiling first a little smile,
As if he knew what magic slept
In his quiet pipe the while;
Then, like a musical adept,
To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled,
And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled
Like a candle flame where salt is sprinkled;
And ere three shrill notes the pipe uttered,
You heard as if an army muttered;
And the muttering grew to a grumbling;
And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling;
And out of the houses the rats came tumbling.
Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,
Brown rats, black rats, grey rats, tawny rats,
Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,
Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,
Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,
Families by tens and dozens,
Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives—

Followed the Piper for their lives.
From street to street he piped advancing,
And step for step they followed dancing,
Until they came to the river Weser
Wherein all plunged and perished
—Save one who, stout as Julius Cæsar,
Swam across and lived to carry
(As he the manuscript he cherished)
To Rat-land home his commentary,
Which was, At the first shrill notes of the pipe,
I heard a sound as of scraping tripe,
And putting apples, wondrous ripe,
Into a cider-press's gripe :
And a moving away of pickle-tub-boards,
And a leaving ajar of conserve-cupboards,
And a drawing the corks of train-oil-flasks,
And a breaking the hoops of butter-casks !
And it seemed as if a voice
(Sweeter than by harp or by psaltery
Is breathed) called out, Oh rats, rejoice !
The world is grown one vast drysaltery !
So munch on, crunch on, take your nuncheon,
Breakfast, supper, dinner, luncheon !
And just as one bulky sugar puncheon,
Ready staved, like a great sun shone
Glorious scarce an inch before me,
Just as methought it said, Come, bore me !
—I found the Weser rolling o'er me.

VIII.

You should have heard the Hamelin people
Ringing the bells till they rocked the steeple ;

Go, cried the Mayor, and get long poles !
Poke out the nests and block up the holes !
Consult with carpenters and builders,
And leave in our town not even a trace
Of the rats !—when suddenly up the face
Of the Piper perked in the market-place,
With a, First, if you please, my thousand guilders !

IX.

A thousand guilders ! The Mayor looked blue ;
So did the Corporation too.
For council dinners made rare havock
With Claret, Moselle, Vin-de-Grave, Hock ;
And half the money would replenish
Their cellar's biggest butt with Rhenish ;
To pay this sum to a wandering fellow
With a gipsy coat of red and yellow !
Beside, quoth the Mayor with a knowing wink,
Our business was done at the river's brink ;
We saw with our eyes the vermin sink,
And what's dead can't come to life, I think.
So, friend, we're not the folks to shrink
From the duty of giving you something for drink,
And a matter of money to put in your poke ;
But, as for the guilders, what we spoke
Of them, as you very well know, was in joke.
Besides, our losses have made us thrifty ;
A thousand guilders ! Come, take fifty !

X.

The Piper's face fell, and he cried,
No trifling ! I can't wait, beside !

I've promised to visit by dinner time
Bagdat, and accept the prime
Of the Head Cook's pottage, all he 's rich in,
For having left, in the Caliph's kitchen,
Of a nest of scorpions no survivor—
With him I proved no bargain-driver,
With you, don't think I'll bate a stiver !
And folks who put me in a passion
May find me pipe after another fashion.

XI.

How ? cried the Mayor, d'ye think I'll brook
Being worse treated than a Cook ?
Insulted by a lazy ribald
With idle pipe and vesture piebald ?
You threaten us, fellow ? Do your worst,
Blow your pipe there till you burst !

XII.

Once more he stept into the street ;
And to his lips again
Laid his long pipe of smooth straight cane ;
And ere he blew three notes (such sweet
Soft notes as yet musician's cunning
Never gave th' enraptured air)
There was a rustling, that seem'd like a bustling
Of merry crowds justling at pitching and hustling,
Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering,
Little hands clapping, and little tongues chattering,
And, like fowls in a farm-yard when barley is scattering,
Out came the children running.
All the little boys and girls,

With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,
And sparkling eyes and teeth like pearls,
Tripping and skipping, ran merrily after
The wonderful music with shouting and laughter.

XIII.

The Mayor was dumb, and the Council stood
As if they were changed into blocks of wood,
Unable to move a step, or cry
To the children merrily skipping by—
Could only follow with the eye
That joyous crowd at the Piper's back.
But how the Mayor was on the rack,
And the wretched Council's bosoms beat,
As the Piper turned from the High Street
To where the Weser rolled its waters
Right in the way of their sons and daughters!
However he turned from South to West,
And to Coppelburg Hill his steps addressed,
And after him the children pressed;
Great was the joy in every breast.
He never can cross that mighty top!
He's forced to let the piping drop,
And we shall see our children stop!
When, lo, as they reached the mountain's side,
A wondrous portal opened wide,
As if a cavern was suddenly hollowed;
And the Piper advanced and the children follow'd,
And when all were in to the very last,
The door in the mountain side shut fast.
Did I say, all? No! One was lame,
And could not dance the whole of the way;

And in after years, if you would blame
His sadness, he was used to say,—
It 's dull in our town since my playmates left !
I can't forget that I'm bereft
Of all the pleasant sights they see,
Which the Piper also promised me ;
For he led us, he said, to a joyous land,
Joining the town and just at hand,
Where waters gushed and fruit-trees grew,
And flowers put forth a fairer hue,
And every thing was strange and new ;
The sparrows were brighter than peacocks here,
And their dogs outran our fallow deer,
And honey-bees had lost their stings,
And horses were born with eagles' wings ;
And just as I felt assured
My lame foot would be speedily cured,
The music stopped and I stood still,
And found myself outside the Hill,
Left alone against my will.
To go now limping as before,
And never hear of that country more.

XIV.

Alas, alas for Hamelin !
  There came into many a burgher's pate
  A text which says, that Heaven's Gate
  Opes to the Rich at as easy a rate
As the needle's eye takes a camel in !
The Mayor sent East, West, North, and South
To offer the Piper by word of mouth,
  Wherever it was men's lot to find him,

Silver and gold to his heart's content,
If he'd only return the way he went,
  And bring the children behind him.
But when they saw 'twas a lost endeavour,
And Piper and dancers were gone for ever,
They made a decree that lawyers never
  Should think their records dated duly
If, after the day of the month and year,
These words did not as well appear,
"And so long after what happened here
  "On the Twenty-second of July,
"Thirteen hundred and Seventy-six:"
And the better in memory to fix
The place of the Children's last retreat,
They called it, the Pied Piper's Street—
Where any one playing on pipe or tabor
Was sure for the future to lose his labour.
Nor suffered they Hostelry or Tavern
  To shock with mirth a street so solemn;
But opposite the place of the cavern
  They wrote the story on a column,
And on the Great Church Window painted
The same, to make the world acquainted
How their children were stolen away;
And there it stands to this very day.
And I must not omit to say
That in Transylvania there's a tribe
Of alien people that ascribe
The outlandish ways and dress
On which their neighbours lay such stress
To their fathers and mothers having risen
Out of some subterraneous prison

Into which they were trepanned
Long time ago in a mighty band
Out of Hamelin town in Brunswick land,
But how or why they don't understand.

XV.

So, Willy, let you and me be wipers
Of scores out with all men—especially pipers:
And, whether they rid us from rats or from mice,
If we've promised them aught, let us keep our promise.

THE RETURN OF THE DRUSES.

PERSONS.

The Grand-Master's Prefect.
The Patriarch's Nuncio.
The Republic's Admiral.
Loÿs de Dreux, Knight-Novice.
Initiated Druses—Djabal.
,, ,, Khalil.
,, ,, Anael.
,, ,, Maani.
,, ,, Karshook, Raghib, Ayoob, and others.
Uninitiated Druses.
Prefect's Guard, Nuncio's Attendants, Admiral's Force.

Time, 14—.

Place—An Islet of the Southern Sporades, colonized by Druses of Lebanon, and garrisoned by the Knights-Hospitallers of Rhodes.

Scene—A Hall in the Prefect's Palace.

The Return of the Druses.

ACT I.

Enter stealthily KARSHOOK, RAGHIB, AYOOB, *and other initiated* Druses, *each as he enters casting off a robe that conceals his distinctive black vest and white turban; then, as giving a loose to exultation,*

Karshook.

THE moon is carried off in purple fire :
Day breaks at last! Break glory, with the day
On Djabal, ready to resume his shape
Of Hakeem, as the Khalif vanished erst
On red Mokattam's brow—our Founder's flesh,
As he resumes our Founder's function!

Ragh. Death
Sweep to the Christian Prefect that enslaved
So long us sad Druse exiles o'er the sea!

Ay. Most joy be thine, O Mother-mount! Thy brood
Returns to thee, no outcasts as we left,
But thus—but thus! Behind, our Prefect's corse;
Before, a presence like the morning—thine,
Absolute Djabal late, and Hakeem now
That day breaks!

Kar. Off then, with disguise at last!
As from our forms this hateful garb we strip,
Lose every tongue its glozing accent too,
Discard each limb the ignoble gesture! Cry,
'Tis the Druse Nation, warders on our mount
Of the world's secret, since the birth of time,
—No kindred slips, no offsets from thy stock,
No spawn of Christians are we, Prefect, we
Who rise . . .

Ay. Who shout . . .

Ragh. Who seize, a first-fruits, ha—
Spoil of the spoiler! Brave!

[*They begin to tear down, and to dispute for, the decorations of the hall.*

Kar. Hold!

Ay. —Mine, I say;
And mine shall it continue!

Kar. Just that fringe!
Take anything beside! Lo, spire on spire,
Curl serpentwise wreathed columns to the top
Of the roof, and hide themselves mysteriously
Among the twinkling lights and darks that haunt
Yon cornice,—where the huge veil they suspend
Before the Prefect's Chamber of delight
Floats wide, then falls again as if its slave,
The scented air, took heart now, and anon
Lost heart to buoy its breadths of gorgeousness
Above the gloom they droop in,—all the porch
Is jewelled o'er with frosted charactery,
A Rhodian eight-point cross of white flame, winking
Hoar-silvered like some fresh-broke marble-stone:
Raze out the Prefect's Cross there, so thou leav'st me

That single fringe!

Ay. Ha, wouldst thou, dog-fox? Help!
—Three hand-breadths of gold fringe my son was set
To twist the night he died!

Kar. Nay, hear the knave!
And I could witness my one daughter borne
A week since to the Prefect's couch, yet fold
These arms, be mute lest word of mine should mar
Our Master's work, delay the Prefect here
A day, prevent his sailing hence for Rhodes—
How know I else?—Hear me denied my right
By such a knave!

Ragh. [*Interposing*]. Each ravage for himself!
Booty enough! On Druses! Be there found
Blood and a heap behind us; with us, Djabal
Turned Hakeem; and before us, Lebanon!
Yields the porch? Spare not! There his minions dragged
Thy daughter, Karshook, to the Prefect's couch:
Ayoob, thy son, to soothe the Prefect's pride,
Bent o'er that task, the death-sweat on his brow,
Carving the spice-tree's heart in scroll-work there:
Onward in Djabal's name!

As the tumult is at height, enter KHALIL. *A pause and silence.*

Kha. Was it for this
Djabal hath summoned you? Deserve you thus
A portion in to-day's event? What, here—
When most behoves your feet fall soft, your eyes
Sink low, your tongues lie still,—at Djabal's side,

Close in his very hearing, who, perchance,
Assumes e'en now lost Hakeem's dreaded shape,—
Dispute you for these gauds?
Ay. How say'st thou, Khalil?
Doubtless our Master prompts thee! Take the fringe,
Old Karshook! I supposed it was a day . . .
Kha. For pillage?
Kar. Hearken, Khalil! Never spoke
A boy so like a song-bird; we avouch thee
Prettiest of all our Master's instruments
Except thy bright twin-sister—thou and Anael
Challenge his prime regard: but we may crave
(Such nothings as we be) a portion too
Of Djabal's favour; in him we believed,
His bound ourselves, him moon by moon obeyed,
Kept silence till this daybreak—so may claim
Reward: who grudges me my claim?
Ay. To-day
Is not as yesterday!
Ragh. Stand off!
Kha. Rebel you?
Must I, the delegate of Hakeem, draw
His wrath on you, the day of our Return?
Other Druses. Wrench from his grasp the fringe!
Hound! must the earth
Vomit her plagues on us thro' thee?—and thee?
Plague me not, Khalil, for their fault!
Kha. Oh, shame!
Thus breaks to-day on you, the mystic tribe
That, flying the approach of Osman, bore
Our faith, a merest spark, from Syria's Ridge
Its birth-place, hither: let the sea divide

These hunters from their prey, you said, and safe
In this dim islet's virgin solitude
Tend we our faith, the spark, till happier time
Fan it to fire; again till Hakeem rise
According to his word that, in the flesh
Which faded on Mokattam ages since,
He, at our extreme need, would interpose,
And, reinstating all in power and bliss,
Lead us himself to Lebanon once more.
Was 't not thus you departed years ago,
Ere I was born?

Druses. 'Twas even thus, years ago.

Kha. And did you not—(according to old laws
Which bid us, lest the Sacred grow Prophane,
Assimilate ourselves in outward rites
With strangers fortune makes our lords, and live
As Christian with the Christian, Jew with Jew,
Druse only with the Druses)—did you call
Or no, to stand 'twixt you and Osman's rage
(Mad to pursue e'en hither thro' the sea
The remnant of your tribe) a race self-vowed
To endless warfare with his hordes and him,
The White-cross Knights of the adjacent Isle?

Kar. And why else rend we down, wrench up, raze out?
The Knights of Rhodes we thus solicited
For help, bestowed on us a fiercer pest
Than aught we fled—their Prefect; who began
By massacre, who thinks to end to-day
By treachery, a scheme of theirs for crushing
Each chance of our return, and taming us
Bond-slaves to Rhodes for ever.

Kha. Say I not?
You, fitted to the Order's purposes,
Your Sheikhs cut off, your very garb proscribed,
Must yet receive one degradation more;
You, from their Prefect, were to be consigned
To the Knights' Patriarch, ardent to outvie
His predecessor in all wickedness;
When suddenly rose Hakeem in the midst,
Djabal, the man in semblance, but our Khalif
Confessed by signs and portents. Ye saw fire
Bicker round Djabal, heard strange music flit
Bird-like about his brow?

Druses. We saw—we heard.

Kha. And as he said hath not our Khalif done?
—Not so disposed events (from land to land
Going invisibly) that when, this morn,
The pact of villany complete, there comes
This Patriarch's Nuncio with this Master's Prefect
To consummate their treason, each will face
For a crouching handful, an uplifted nation;
For simulated Christians, confessed Druses;
And, for slaves past hope of the Mother-mount,
Freedmen returning there 'neath Venice' flag;
—Venice, which, these proud Hospitallers' foe,
Grants us from Candia escort home at price
Of our relinquished islet—Venice, brothers,
Whose promised argosies should stand by this
Towards the harbour: is it now that you,
And you, selected from the rest to carry
The burthen of the Khalif's secret, further
To-day's event, entitled by your wrongs,
And witness in the Prefect's hall his fate—

That you dare clutch these gauds? Ay, drop them!
Kar. True,
Most true, all this; and yet, may one dare hint,
Thou art the youngest of us?—tho' employed
Abundantly as Djabal's confidant,
Transmitter of his mandates, even now:
Much less whene'er beside him Anael graces
The cedar throne, his Queen-bride, art thou like
To occupy its lowest step that day!
And, Khalil, wert thou plucked as thou aspirest,
Forbidden such or such an honour,—say,
Would silence serve so amply?
Kha. Karshook thinks
I covet honours? Well, nor idly thinks!
Honours? I have demanded of them all
The greatest!
Kar. I supposed so.
Kha. Judge yourselves!
Turn—thus: 'tis in the alcove at the back
Of yonder columned porch, whose entrance now
The veil hides, that our Prefect holds his state;
Receives the Nuncio when the one, from Rhodes,
The other lands from Syria; there they meet.
Now, I have sued with earnest prayers . . .
Kar. For what
Shall the Bride's brother vainly sue?
Kha. That mine—
Avenging in one blow a myriad wrongs,
—Might be the hand that slays the Prefect there!
Djabal reserves that office for himself. [*A silence.*
Thus far, as youngest of you all, I spoke
—Scarce more enlightened than yourselves: since, near

As I approach him, nearer as I trust
Soon to approach our Master, he reveals
Only the Khalif's power, not glory yet:
Therefore I reasoned with you: now, as servant
To Djabal, bearing his authority,
Hear me appoint your several posts! Till noon
None see him save myself and Anael—once
The deed achieved, our Khalif will appear.

Enter a Druse.

The Druse. Our Prefect lands from Rhodes!—Without a sign
That he suspects aught since he left our Isle;
Nor in his train a single guard beyond
The few he sailed with hence—so have we learned
From Loÿs.

Kar. Loÿs? Is not Loÿs gone
For ever?

Ay. Loÿs, the Frank Knight, returned?

The Druse. Loÿs, the boy, stood on the leading prow
Conspicuous in his gay attire—has leapt
Into the surf already: since day-dawn
I kept watch to the Northward; take but note
Of my poor vigilance to Djabal!

Kha. Peace!
Thou, Karshook, with thy company, receive
The Prefect as appointed: see all keep
The wonted show of servitude: announce
His entry here by the accustomed peal
Of trumpets, then await the further pleasure

Of Djabal! (Loÿs back, whom Djabal sent
To Rhodes that we might spare the single Knight
Worth sparing!)

Enter a second Druse.

The Druse. I espied him first! Say, I
First spied the Nuncio's galley from the South!
Said'st thou a Crossed-key's flag would flap the mast?
It nears apace! One galley and no more—
If Djabal chance to ask who spied the flag,
Forget not I it was!

Kha. Thou, Ayoob, bring
The Nuncio and his followers hither! Break
One rule prescribed, ye wither in your blood,
Die at your fault!

Enter a third Druse.

The Druse. I shall see home, see home!
—Shall banquet in the sombre groves again.
Hail to thee, Khalil! Venice looms afar—
The argosies of Venice, like a cloud,
Bear up from Candia in the distance!

Kha. Joy!
Summon our people, Raghib! Bid all forth!
Tell them the long-kept secret, old and young!
Set free the captives, have the trampled raise
Their faces from the dust, because at length
The cycle is complete, and Hakeem's reign
Begins anew! Say, Venice for our guard,
Ere night we steer for Syria! Hear you, Druses?
Hear you this crowning witness to the claims

Of Djabal! Oh, I spoke of hope and fear,
Reward and punishment, because he bade
Who has the right; for me, what should I say
But, mar not those imperial lineaments,
No majesty of all that rapt regard
Vex by the least omission! Let him rise
Without a check from you!

Druses. Let Djabal rise!

Enter Loÿs.—*The* Druses *are silent.*

Loÿs. Who speaks of Djabal?—for I seek him, friends!
[*Aside.*] *Tu Dieu!* 'Tis as our Isle broke out in song
For joy its Prefect-incubus drops off
To-day, and I succeed him in his rule!
But no—they cannot dream of their good fortune!
[*Aloud.*] Peace to you, Druses! I have tidings for you,
But first for Djabal: where 's your tall bewitcher,
With that small Arab thin-lipped silver mouth?

Kha. [*Aside to* Karshook.] Loÿs, in truth! Yet Djabal cannot err!

Kar. [*To* Khalif.] And who takes charge of Loÿs? That's forgotten,
Despite thy wariness! Will Loÿs stand
And see his comrades slaughtered?

Loÿs. [*Aside.*] How they shrink
And whisper, with those rapid faces! What!
The sight of me in their oppressors' garb
Strikes terror to the simple tribe! God's shame
On those that bring our Order ill repute!
But all 's at end now; better days begin

For these mild mountaineers from over-sea ;
The timidest shall have in me no Prefect
To cower at thus ! [*Aloud.*] I asked for Djabal.
Kar. [*Aside.*] Better
One lured him, ere he can suspect, inside
The corridor ; 't were easy then despatch
A youngster. [*To* Loÿs.] Djabal passed some minutes since
Thro' yonder porch, and . . .
Kha. [*Aside.*] Hold ! What, him despatch ?
The only Christian of them all we charge
No tyranny upon ? Who,—noblest Knight
Of all that learned from time to time their trade
Of lust and cruelty among us,—heir
To Europe's pomps, a truest child of pride,—
Yet stood between the Prefect and ourselves
From the beginning ? Loÿs, Djabal makes
Account of, and precisely sent to Rhodes
For safety ?—I have charge of him !
[*To* Loÿs.] Sir Loÿs,—

Loÿs. There, cousins ! Does Sir Loÿs strike you dead ?

Kha. [*Advancing.*] Djabal has intercourse with few or none
Till noontide : but, your pleasure ?
Loÿs. " Intercourse
" With few or none ? "—(Ah, Khalil, when you spoke
I saw not your smooth face ! All health !—and health
To Anael ! How fares Anael ?)—" Intercourse
" With few or none ? " Forget you I've been friendly
With Djabal long ere you or any Druse ?
—Enough of him at Rennes, I think, beneath

The Duke my father's roof! He'd tell by the hour,
With fixed white eyes beneath his swarthy brow,
Plausiblest stories . . .

Kha. Stories, say you?—Ah,
The quaint attire!

Loÿs. My dress for the last time.
How sad I cannot make you understand,
This ermine, o'er a shield, betokens me
Of Bretagne, ancientest of provinces
And noblest; and, what 's best and oldest there,
See, Dreux', our house's blazon, which the Nuncio
Tacks to an Hospitaller's vest to-day!

Kha. The Nuncio we await? What brings you back
From Rhodes, Sir Loÿs?

Loÿs. How you island-tribe
Forget the world 's awake while here you drowse!
What brings me back? What should not bring me, rather?
Is not my year's probation out? I come
To take the knightly vows.

Kha. What's that you wear?

Loÿs. This Rhodian cross? The cross your Prefect wore.
You should have seen, as I saw, the full Chapter
Rise to a man while they transferred this cross
From that unworthy Prefect's neck to . . . (fool—
My secret will escape me!) In a word,
My year's probation 's passed, and Knight ere eve
Am I; bound, like the rest, to yield my wealth
To the common stock, to live in chastity,
(We Knights espouse alone our Order's fame)

—Change this gay weed for the black white-crossed
gown,
And fight to death against the Infidel.
—Not, therefore, against you, you Christians with
Such partial difference only as befits
The peacefullest of tribes! But Khalil, prithee,
Is not the Isle brighter than wont to-day?

Kha. Ah, the new sword!

Loÿs. See now! You handle sword
As 'twere a camel's staff! Pull! That 's my motto,
Annealed, "*Pro fide*," on the blade in blue.

Kha. No curve in it? Surely a blade should
curve!

Loÿs. Straight from the wrist! Loose—it should
poise itself!

Kha. [*Waving with irrepressible exultation the sword.*
We are a nation, Loÿs, of old fame
Among the mountains! Rights have we to keep
With the sword too!
[*Remembering himself.*] But I forget—you bid me
Seek Djabal?

Loÿs. What! A sword's sight scares you not?
(The People I will make of him and them!
Oh, let my Prefect-sway begin at once!)
Bring Djabal—say, indeed, that come he must!

Kha. At noon seek Djabal in the Prefect's Chamber,
And find— [*Aside.*] Nay, 't is thy cursed race's
token,
Frank pride, no special insolence of thine!
[*Aloud.*] Tarry, and I will do your bidding, Loÿs.
[*To the rest, aside.*] Now, forth you! I proceed to
Djabal straight.

Oh, adds it not a joy to even thy joy,
Djabal, that I report all friends were true?
[*Exit* KHALIL, *followed by the* Druses.
Loÿs. Tu Dieu! How happy I shall make these Druses!
Was 't not surpassingly contrived of me
To get the long list of their wrongs by heart,
Then take the first pretence for stealing off
From these poor islanders, present myself
Sudden at Rhodes before the noble Chapter,
And (as best proof of ardour in its cause
Which ere to-night will have become, too, mine)
Acquaint it with this plague-sore in its body,
This Prefect and his villanous career?
The princely Synod! All I dared to ask
Was his dismissal; and they graciously
Consigned his very office to myself—
Myself may heal whate'er 's diseased!
And good
For them they did so! Since I never felt
How lone a lot, tho' brilliant, I embrace,
Till now that, past retrieve, the lot is mine—
To live thus, and thus die! Yet, as I leapt
On shore, so home a feeling greeted me
That I could half believe in Djabal's story
Of some Count Dreux and ancestor of ours
Who, sick of wandering from Bouillon's war,
Left his old name in Lebanon.
Long days
At least to spend in the Isle! and, my news known
An hour hence, what if Anael turns on me

The great black eyes I must forget?
Why, fool,
Recall them, then? My business is with Djabal,
Not Anael! Djabal tarries: if I seek him?—
The Isle is brighter than its wont to-day! [*Exit.*

ACT II.

Enter DJABAL.

Dja. I—Hakeem? To have wandered thro' the world,
Sown falsehood, and thence reaped now scorn, now faith,
For my one chant with many a change, my tale
Of outrage, and my prayer for vengeance—took
No less than Hakeem? The persuading Loÿs
To pass probation here; the getting access
By Loÿs to the Prefect; worst of all,
The gaining my tribe's confidence by fraud
That would disgrace the very Franks, a few
Of Europe's secrets that subdue the flame,
The wave,—to ply a simple tribe with these
Took Hakeem?
And I feel this first to-day!
Does the day break, is the hour imminent
When one deed, when my whole life's deed, my deed
Must be accomplished? Hakeem? What of Hakeem?
Shout, rather, "Djabal, Youssof's child, thought slain
"With his whole race, the Druses' Sheikhs this Prefect
"Endeavoured to extirpate—saved, a child,
"Returns from traversing the world, a man,
"Able to take revenge, lead back the march
"To Lebanon"—so shout, and who gainsays?
But now, because delusion mixed itself

Insensibly with this career, all 's changed!
Have I brought Venice to afford us convoy?
True—but my jugglings wrought that! Put I heart
Into our people where no heart lurked?—Ah,
What cannot an impostor do!
Not this!
Not do this which I do! Not bid, avaunt
Falsehood! Thou shalt not keep thy hold on me!
—Nor even get a hold on me! 'Tis now
This day—hour—minute—'tis as here I stand
On the accursed threshold of the Prefect,
That I am found deceiving and deceived!
And now what do I?—hasten to the few
Deceived, ere they deceive the many—shout,
As I professed, I did believe myself!
Say, Druses, had you seen a butchery—
If Ayoob, Karshook saw——Maäni there
Must tell you how I saw my father sink;
My mother's arms twine still about my neck;
I hear my brother's shriek, here 's yet the scar
Of what was meant for my own death-blow—say,
If you had woke like me, grown year by year
Out of the tumult in a far-off clime,
Would it be wondrous that delusions grew?
I walked the world, asked help at every hand;
Came help or no? Not this and this? Which helps
When I returned with, found the Prefect here,
The Druses here, all here but Hakeem's self,
Reserved for such a juncture,—could I call
My mission aught but Hakeem's? Promised Hakeem
More than performs the Djabal—you absolve?
—Me, you will never shame before the crowd

Yet happily ignorant?—Me both throngs surround!
—Who, thus surrounded, slay for you and them
The Prefect, lead to Lebanon! No Khalif,
But Sheikh once more! Djabal—no longer . . .

Enter KHALIL *hastily.*

Kha. —Hakeem!
'Tis told! The whole Druse nation knows thee, Hakeem,
As we! and mothers lift on high their babes
Who seem aware, so glisten their great eyes,
Thou hast not failed us; ancient brows are proud!
Our elders could not earlier die, it seems,
Than at thy coming! The Druse heart is thine!
Take it! my lord and theirs, be thou adored!
Dja. [*Aside.*] Adored!—but I renounce it utterly!
Kha. Already are they instituting choirs
And dances to the Khalif, as of old
'Tis chronicled you bade them.
Dja. [*Aside.*] I abjure it!
'Tis not mine—not for me!
Kha. Why pour they wine
Flavoured like honey and bruised mountain herbs?
Or wear those strings of sun-dried cedar-fruit?
Oh—let me tell you—Esaad, we supposed
Doting, is carried forth, eager to see
The sun rise on the Isle—he can see now!
The shamed Druse women never wept before:
They can look up when we reach home, they say.
Smell!—sweet cane, saved in Lilith's breast thus long—

Sweet!—it grows wild in Lebanon. And I
Alone do nothing for you! 'Tis my office
Just to announce what well you know; but thus
You bid me. At this selfsame moment tend
The Prefect, Nuncio, and the Admiral
Hither, by their three sea-paths—nor forget
Who were the trusty watchers!—You forget?
Like me, who do forget that Anael bade . . .

Dja. [*Aside.*] Ay, Anael, Anael—is that said at last?
Louder than all, that would be said, I knew!
What does abjuring mean, confessing mean,
To the people? Till that woman crossed my path,
On went I solely for my people's sake:
I saw her, and myself too saw I first,
And slackened pace: "if I should prove indeed
Hakeem—with Anael here!"

Kha. (Ah, he is rapt!)
Dare I at such a moment break on you
Even to do my sister's bidding? Yes!
The eyes are Djabal's and not Hakeem's yet!
Though but till I have spoken this, perchance.

Dja. [*Aside.*] To yearn to tell her, and yet have no one
Great heart's-word that will tell her! I could gasp
Doubtless one such word out, and die!
[*Aloud.*] You said
That Anael . . .

Kha. . . . Fain would see you, speak with you,
Before you change, discard this Djabal's shape
She knows, for Hakeem's shape she is to know:
Something 's to say that will not from her mind:
I know not how—"Let him but come!" she said.

Dja. [*Half apart.*] My nation—all my Druses—
how fare they?
Those I must save, and suffer thus to save,
Hold they their posts? Wait they their Khalif too?
Kha. All at the signal pant to flock around
That banner of a brow!
Dja. [*Aside.*] And when they flock,
Confess to them, and after, for reward,
Be chased with howlings to her feet perchance?
—Have the poor outraged Druses, deaf and blind
Precede me there—forestall my story, there—
Tell it in mocks and jeers—
I lose myself!
Who needs a Hakeem to direct him now?
I need the veriest child—why not this child?
[*Turning abruptly to* KHALIL.
You are a Druse too, Khalil; you were nourished
Like Anael with our mysteries: if she
Could vow, so nourished, to love only one
Who should revenge the Druses, whence proceeds
Your silence? Wherefore made you no essay,
Who thus implicitly can execute
My bidding? What have I done, you could not?
And, knowing more than Anael the prostration
Of our once lofty tribe, the daily life
Of this detested . . .
(Does he come, you say,
This Prefect? All 's in readiness?
Kha. The sword,
The sacred robe, the Khalif's mystic tiar,
Laid up so long, all are disposed beside
The Prefect's chamber.)

Dja. —Why did you despair?
Kha. I know our nation's state. Too surely know,
As you, who speak to prove me! Wrongs like theirs
Should wake revenge: but when I sought the wronged
And spoke,—"The Prefect stabbed your son—arise!
"Your daughter, while you starve, eats shameless bread
"In his pavilion—then, arise!"—my speech
Fell idly—'twas, "Be silent, or worse fare!
"Endure, till time's slow cycle prove complete!
"Who may'st thou be that tak'st on thee to thrust
"Into this peril—art thou Hakeem?" No!
Only a mission like your mission renders
All these obedient at a breath, subdues
Their private passions, brings their wills to one!
Dja. You think so?
Kha. Even now—when they have witnessed
Your miracles—had I not threatened them
With Hakeem's vengeance, they would mar the whole,
And lie ere this, each with his special prize,
Safe in his dwelling, leaving our main hope
To perish! No! When these have kissed your feet
At Lebanon, the Past purged off, the Present
Clear, for the Future even Hakeem's mission
May end, and I perchance, or any child,
Could rule them thus renewed.—I talk to thee!
Dja. And wisely. (He is Anael's brother, pure
As Anael's self.) Go say, I come to her.
Haste! I will follow you. [*Exit* KHALIL.
Oh, not confess
To these—the blinded multitude—confess,
Before at least the fortune of my deed
Half authorize its means! Only to her

Let me confess my fault, who in my path
Curled up like incense from a mage-king's tomb
When he would have the wayfarer descend
Thro' the earth's rift and take hid treasure up.
When should my first child's-carelessness have stopped
If not when I, whose lone youth hurried past
Letting each joy 'scape for the Druses' sake,
At length recovered in one Druse all joys?
Were her brow brighter, her eyes richer, still
Would I confess! On the gulf's verge I pause.
How could I slay the Prefect, thus and thus?
Be thou my guardian, not destroyer, Anael! [*Exit.*

Enter ANAEL, *and* MAÄNI, *who is assisting to array her in the ancient dress of the Druses.*

An. Those saffron vestures of the tabret-girls!
Comes Djabal, think you?
Maä. Doubtless Djabal comes.
An. Dost thou snow-swathe thee kinglier, Lebanon,
Than in my dreams?—Nay, all the tresses off
My forehead—look I lovely so? He says
That I am lovely.
Maä. Lovely! nay, that hangs
Awry.
An. You tell me how a khandjar hangs?
The sharp side, thus, along the heart, see, marks
The maiden of our class. Are you content
For Djabal as for me?
Maä. Content, my child.
An. Oh, mother, tell me more of him. He comes
Even now—tell more, fill up my soul with him!

Maä. And did I not . . . yes, surely . . . tell you all?
An. What will be changed in Djabal when the Change
Arrives? Which feature? Not his eyes!
Maä. 'Tis writ,
Our Khalif's eyes rolled fire and clove the dark
Superbly.
An. Not his eyes! His voice perhaps?
Yet that 's no change; for a grave current lived
—Grandly beneath the surface ever lived,
That, scattering, broke as in live silver spray
While . . . ah, the bliss . . . he would discourse to me
In that enforced, still fashion, word on word!
'Tis the old current that must swell thro' that,
For what least tone, Maäni, could I lose?
'Tis surely not his voice will change!
—If Hakeem
Only stood by! If Djabal, somehow, passed
Out of the radiance as from out a robe;
Possessed, but was not it!
He lived with you?
Well—and that morning Djabal saw me first
And heard my vow never to wed but one
Who saved my People first—that day . . . proceed!
Maä. Once more then: from the time of his return
In secret, changed so since he left the Isle
That I, who screened our Emir's last of sons,
This Djabal, from the Prefect's massacre
—Who bade him ne'er forget the child he was,
—Who dreamed so long the youth he had become—
I knew not in the man that child; the man

Who spoke alone of hopes to save our tribe,
How he had gone from land to land to save
Our tribe—allies were sure, nor foes to dread;
And much he mused, days, nights, alone he mused;
But never till that day when, pale and worn
As by a persevering woe, he cried
"Is there not one Druse left me?"—And I showed
The way to Khalil's and your hiding-place
From the abhorred eye of the Prefect here,
So that he saw you, heard you speak—till then,
Never did he announce—(how the moon seemed
To ope and shut the while above us both!)
—His mission was the mission promised us—
The cycle had revolved—all things renewing,
He was lost Hakeem clothed in flesh to lead
His children home anon, now veiled to work
Great purposes—the Druses now would change.
An. And they have changed! And obstacles did sink,
And furtherances rose! And round his form
Played fire, and music beat her angel wings!
My people, let me more rejoice, oh, more
For you than for myself! Did I but watch
Afar the pageant, feel the Khalif pass,
One of the throng, how proud were I—tho' ne'er
Singled by Djabal's glance! But to be chosen
His own from all, the most his own of all,
To be exalted with him, side by side.
Lead the exulting Druses, meet . . . ah, how
Worthily meet the maidens who have watched
Ever beneath the cedars—how deserve
This honour in their eyes? So bright are they
That saffron-vestured sound the tabrets there—

The girls who throng there in my dreams! One hour
And all is over: how shall I do aught
That may deserve next hour's exalting?—How?—
[*Suddenly to* MAÄNI.
Mother, I am not worthy him! I read it
Still in his eyes! He stands as if to tell me
I am not, yet forbears! Why else revert
To one theme ever?—how mere human gifts
Suffice him in myself—whose worship fades,
Whose awe goes off ever at his approach,
As now, that as he comes . . .
[*As* DJABAL *enters.*] Oh, why is it
I cannot kneel to you?
Dja. Rather 'tis I
Should kneel to you, my Anael!
An. Even so!
For never seem you . . . shall I speak the truth? . . .
Never a God to me! 'Tis the Man's hand,
Eye, voice! Oh, do you veil these to our people,
Or but to me? Them, let me think, to them!
And brightness is their veil, shadow—my truth!
You mean that I should never kneel to you
—So I will kneel!
Dja. [*Preventing her.*] No—no!
[*Feeling the khandjar as he raises her.*
Ha, have you chosen . . .
An. The khandjar with our ancient garb. But, Djabal,
Change not, be not exalted yet—give time
That I may plan more, perfect more. My blood
Beats—beats!
[*Aside.*] O must I then—since Loÿs leaves us

Never to come again, renew in me
Those doubts so near effaced already—must
I needs confess them now to Djabal?—Own
That when I Loÿs saw and Loÿs heard,
My faith fell, and the woeful thought flashed first
That each effect of Djabal's presence, taken
For proof of more than human attributes
In him by me whose heart at his approach
Beat fast, whose brain while he was by swam round,
Whose soul at his departure died away,
—That every such effect might have been wrought
In others' frames, tho' not in mine, by Loÿs
Or any merely mortal presence? Doubt
Is fading fast; shall I reveal it now?
And yet to be rewarded presently
With doubt unexpiated, undisclosed!

Dja. [*Aside.*] Avow the truth? I cannot! In what words
Avow that all she loves in me is false?
—Which yet has served that flower-like love of hers
To climb by, like the clinging gourd, and clasp
With its divinest wealth of leaf and bloom:
Could I take down the prop-work, in itself
So vile, yet interlaced and overlaid
With painted cups and fruitage—might these still
Bask in the sun, unconscious their own strength
Of matted stalk and tendril had replaced
The old support thus silently withdrawn!
But no; the beauteous fabric crushes too.
'Tis not for my sake but for Anael's sake
I leave her soul this Hakeem where it leans!
And yet—a thought comes: here my work is done

At every point; the Druses must return—
Venice is pledged to that: 'tis for myself
I stay now, not for them—to stay or spare
The Prefect whom imports it save myself?
What would his death be but my own reward?
Then, mine I will forego. It is foregone!
Let him escape with all my House's blood!
Ere he can land I will have disappeared,
And Hakeem, Anael loved, shall, fresh as first,
Live in her memory, keeping her sublime
Above the world. She cannot touch that world
By ever knowing what I truly am,
Since Loÿs,—of mankind the only one
Able to link my present with my past,
That life in Europe with this Island life,
Thence able to unmask me,—I've disposed
Safely at last at Rhodes, and . . .

Enter KHALIL.

Kha. Loÿs greets you!
Dja. Loÿs? To drag me back? It cannot be!
An. Loys! Ah, doubt may not be stifled so!
Doubt must be quite destroyed or quite confirmed,
Must find day somehow live or dead. 'Tis well!
Kha. Can I have erred that you so gaze on me?
True,
I forgot, in the glad press of tidings
Of higher import, Loÿs is returned
Before the Prefect, with, if possible,
Twice the light-heartedness of old. You'd think
On some inauguration he expects

To-day, the world's fate hung.
Dja. —And asks for me?
Kha. Ah, you know all things! You in chief he greets,
But every body else is to be happy
At his arrival, he declares: were Loÿs
Thou, Khalif, he could have no wider soul
To take us in with. How I love that Loÿs!
Dja. Shame winds me with her tether round and round.
An. [*Aside.*] Loÿs? I take the trial: meet it is
The little I can do be done; that faith,
All I can offer, want no perfecting
Which my own act may compass. Aye, this way
All may go well nor that ignoble spot
Be chased by other aid than mine. Best go
Close to my fear, weigh Loÿs with my Lord,
The mortal's with the more than mortal's gifts!
Dja. [*Aside.*] Before, there were so few deceived, and now
There's doubtless not one least Druse in the Isle
But (having learned my superhuman claims,
And calling me his Khalif now) will clash
The whole truth out from Loÿs at first word!
And Loÿs, for his part, will hold me up,
With a Frank's unimaginable scorn
Of this imposture, to my people's eyes,
To Khalil's eyes, to Anael's eyes! Oh, how
—How hold him longer yet a little while
From them, amuse him here until I plan
How he and I at once may leave the Isle?
There 's Anael!

An. Please you?
Dja. (Anael only!) Anael,
I would pass some few minutes here within
Ere I see Loÿs: you shall speak with him
Until I join you and declare the end.
An. [*Aside*]. As I divined: he bids me save myself,
Allows me the probation—I accept!
Let me see Loÿs!
Loys. [*Without.*] Djabal!
An. [*Aside.*] 'Tis his voice.
The smooth Frank trifler with our people's wrongs,
The self-complacent boy-inquirer, loud
On this and that inflicted tyranny,
—Aught serving to parade an ignorance
Of how wrong feels, inflicted! Let me close
With what I viewed at distance, and, myself,
Probe this delusion to the core!
Dja. He comes!
Khalil, along with me! while Anael waits
Till I return once more—and but once more!
[*Exeunt* DJABAL *and* KHALIL. *Manet* ANAEL.

ACT III.

ANAEL *and* LOÏS.

An. Here leave me! Here I wait another. 'Twas
For no mad protestation of a love
Like this you say possesses you, I came.
Loïs. Love—how protest a love I dare not feel?
Mad words may doubtless have escaped me—you
Are here—I only feel you here!
An. No more!
Loïs. Say but again, whom could you love? I dare,
Alas! say nothing of myself, who am
A Knight now, and when Knighthood we embrace
Love we abjure: so speak on safely—speak,
Lest I speak and betray my faith so? Sure
To say your breathing passes thro' me, changes
My blood to spirit, and my spirit to you,
As Heaven the sacrificer's wine to it—
This is not to protest my love? You said
You could love one . . .
An. One only! We are bent
To the earth—who raises up my tribe, I love;
The Prefect bends us—who removes him; we
Have ancient rights—who gives them back to us,
I love.—Forbear me! Let my hand go!
Loïs. Him
You could love only? Where is Djabal? Stay!
Yet wherefore stay? Who does this but myself?
Had I apprised her that I come to do

Just this, what more could she acknowledge? No!
She sees into my heart's core: what is it
Feeds either cheek with red as June some rose?
Why turns she from me? Ah fool, over-fond
To dream I could call up . .
. . What never dream
Yet feigned! 'Tis love! Oh Anael speak to me!
Djabal!

An. Seek Djabal by the Prefect's chamber
At noon! [*She paces the room.*

Loÿs. And am I not the Prefect now?
Is it my fate to be the only one
Able to win her love, the only one
Unable to accept her love? The Past
Breaks up beneath my footing—came I here
This morn as to a slave, to set her free
And take her thanks, and then spend day by day
Beside her in the Isle content? What works
This knowledge in me now! Her eye has broken
The faint disguise away—for Anael's sake
I left the isle, for her espoused the cause
Of the Druses, all for her I thought, till now,
To live without!
As I must live: to-day
Ordains me Knight, forbids me—never shall
Forbid me to profess myself, heart, arm
Thy soldier!

An. Djabal you awaited, comes!

Loÿs. What wouldst thou, Loÿs? See him? Nought
beside
Is wanting—I have felt his voice a spell
From first to last. He brought me here, made known

The Druses to me, drove me hence to seek
Redress for them; and shall I meet him now
When nought is wanting but a word of his
To—what?—induce me to spurn hope, faith, pride,
Honour away,—to cast my lot among
His tribe, become a proverb in men's mouths,
Breaking my high pact of companionship
With those who graciously bestowed on me
The very opportunities I turn
Against them. Loÿs, they procured thee, think,
What now procures her love! Not Djabal now!

An. The Prefect also comes.

Loÿs. Him let me see,
Not Djabal! Him, degraded at a word,
To please me,—to attest belief in me—
And, after, Djabal! Yes, ere I return
To her, the Nuncio's vow shall have destroyed
This heart's rebellion, and coërced this will
For ever.

Anael, not until the vows
Irrevocably fix me . . .

Let me leave her
The Prefect, or I lose myself for ever. [*Exit.*

An. Yes, I am calm now—just one way remains—
So I attest my faith in him: for, see,
I am quite lost now; Loÿs and Djabal stand
On either side—two men! I balance looks
And words, give Djabal a man's preference,
No more. The Khalif is absorbed in Djabal!
It is for a love like this that he who saves
My race, selects me for his bride? One way!—

Enter DJABAL.

Dja. [*To himself.*] No moment is to spare then ; 'tis resolved !
If Khalil may be trusted to lead back
The Druses, and if Loÿs can be lured
Out of the Isle—can I procure his silence
Or promise never to return at least,—
All 's over ! Even now my bark is ready ;
I reach the next wild islet and the next,
And lose myself thus in the sun for ever !
Anael remains now.—Think ! She loved in me
But Hakeem—Hakeem 's vanished ; and on Djabal
Had never glanced—

An. Djabal, I am thine own !

Dja. Mine ? Djabal's ?—As if Hakeem had not been ?

An. Not Djabal's ? Say first, do you read my thoughts ?
Why need I speak, if you can read my thoughts ?

Dja. I do not, I have said a thousand times.

An. (My secret's safe, I shall surprise him yet !)
Djabal, I knew your secret from the first—
Djabal, when first I saw you . . . (by our porch
You leant and pressed the tinkling veil away,
And one fringe fell behind your neck—I see !)
I knew you were not human, for I said
" This dim secluded house where the sea beats
Is Heaven to me—my people's huts are Hell
To them ; this august form will follow me,
Mix with the waves his voice will, him have I
And they the Prefect ; Oh, my happiness

Rounds to the full whether I chose or no!
His eyes met mine, he was about to speak,
His hands grew damp—surely he meant to say
He let me love him—in that moment's bliss
I shall forget my people, pine for home—
They pass and they repass with pallid eyes!"
I vowed at once a certain vow—this vow—
Not to embrace you till my tribe was saved—
Embrace me!

Dja. [*Shrinking.*] And she loved me! Nought remained
But that! Nay, Anael, is the Prefect dead?

An. Ah, you reproach me! True, his death crowns all,
I know—I should know—and I would do much,
Believe—but, death—Oh, you, who have known death,
Would never doom the Prefect, were death fearful
As we report!
Death!—A fire curls within us
From the foot's palm, and fills up to the brain,
Up, out, then shatters the whole bubble-shell
Of flesh perchance!
Death!—witness I would die,
Whate'er death be, would venture now to die
For Maäni—for Khalil—but for him?—
Nay but embrace me, Djabal, in assurance
My vow will not be broken, for I must
Do something to attest my faith in you,
Be worthy you!

Dja. [*Avoiding her.*] I come for that—to say
Such an occasion is at hand—'tis like

I leave you—that we part, my Anael,—part
For ever!
An. We part? Just so! I have succumbed, he thinks,
I am, he thinks, unworthy—and nought less
Will serve than such approval of my faith!
Then, we part not! Yet remains there no way short
Of that? Oh, not that!
Death!—Yet a hurt bird
Died in my arms—its eyes filmed—"Nay it sleeps,"
I said, "will wake to-morrow well"—'twas dead!
Dja. I stand here and time fleets—Anael—I come
To bid a last farewell to you—we never
Perhaps shall meet again—but, ere the Prefect
Arrives . . .

Enter KHALIL, *breathlessly.*

Kha. He 's here! The Prefect! Twenty guards,
No more—no sign he dreams of danger—all
Awaits you only—Ayoob, Karshook, keep
Their posts—wait but the deed's accomplishment
To join us with your Druses to a man!
Still holds his course the Nuncio—near and near
The fleet from Candia's steering.
Dja. [*Aside.*] All is lost!
—Or won?
Kha. And I have laid the sacred robes,
The sword, the head-tiar, at the porch as 'twas
Commanded—You will hear the Prefect's trumpet.
Dja. Anael, I keep them, him then, past retrieve,

I slay—'tis forced on me! As I began
I must conclude—so be it!
Kha. For the rest
(Save Loÿs, but a solitary sword)
All is so safe that—I will ne'er entreat
Your post again of you—tho' danger 's none,
There must be glory only meet for you
In slaying the Prefect!
An. And 'tis now that Djabal
Would leave me!—in the glory meet for him!
Dja. As glory I would yield the deed to you,
Or any one; what peril there may be
I keep. All things conspire to hound me on!
Not now, my soul, draw back, at least! Not now!
The course is plain, howe'er obscure all else—
Once offer this tremendous sacrifice,
Prevent what else will be irreparable,
Secure these transcendental helps, regain
The Cedars—then let all this clear itself!
I slay him!
Kha. Anael, and no part for us!
[*To* DJABAL.] Hast thou possessed her with . . .
Dja. [*To* ANAEL.] Whom speak you to?
What is it you behold there? Nay, this smile
Turns stranger—shudder you? The man must die,
As thousands of our race have died thro' him.
A blow, and I discharge his weary soul
The body that pollutes it—let him fill
Some new expiatory form of earth,
Or sea, the reptile, or some aëry thing—
What is there in his death?
An. My brother said

Is there no part in it for us?

Dja. For Khalil,—
The trumpet will announce the Nuncio's entry;
Here I shall find the Prefect hastening
In the Pavilion to receive him—here
I slay the Prefect; meanwhile Ayoob leads
The Nuncio with his guards within—once he
Secured in the outer hall, bid Ayoob bar
Entry or egress till I give the sign
Which waits the landing of the argosies
Yourself announce: when he receives my sign
Let him throw ope the palace doors, admit
The Druses to behold their tyrant ere
We leave for ever this detested spot.
Go, Khalil, hurry all—no pause—no pause!
Whirl on the dream, secure to wake anon!

Kha. What sign?

Dja. Whoe'er shall show my ring admit
To Ayoob and the Nuncio. How she stands!
Have I not—I must have some task for her.
Anael! not that way! That's the Prefect's chamber.
Anael, keep you the ring—give you the sign!
(It holds her safe amid the stir)—You will
Be faithful?

An. [*Taking the ring.*] I would fain be worthy you! [*Trumpet without.*

Kha. He comes.

Dja. And I too come!

An. One word, but one!
Say, shall you be exalted at the deed?
Then? On the instant?

Dja. I exalted? What?

He there—we thus—our wrongs revenged—our tribe
Set free—Oh then shall I, assure yourself,
Shall you, shall each of us, be in his death
Exalted!

Kha. He is here!

Dja. Away—away! [*Exeunt.*

Enter the PREFECT *with* Guards, *and* LOŸS.

The Prefect. [*To* Guards.] Back, I say, to the galley every guard!
That 's my sole care now—see each bench retains
Its complement of rowers—I embark
O' the instant, since this Knight will have it so.
Alas me! Could you have the heart, my Loÿs?
[*To a* Guard *who whispers.*] Oh, bring the holy Nuncio here forthwith! [*Exeunt* Guards.
Loÿs, a rueful sight, confess, to see
The grey discarded Prefect leave his post,
With tears i' the eye! So you are Prefect now?
You depose me—you succeed me? Ha, ha!

Loÿs. And dare you laugh, whom laughter less becomes
Than yesterday's forced meekness we beheld . . .

Pref. . . . When you so eloquently pleaded, Loÿs,
For my dismissal from the post?—Ah, meek
With cause enough, consult the Nuncio else!
And wish him the like meekness—for so staunch
A servant of the church can scarce have bought
His share in the Isle, and paid for it, hard pieces!
You've my successor to condole with, Nuncio!
I shall be safe by then i' the galley, Loÿs!

Loÿs. You make as you would tell me you rejoice
To leave your scene of . . .
Pref. Trade in the dear Druses?
Blood and sweat traffic? Spare what yesterday
We had enough of! Drove I in the isle
A profitable game? Learn wit, my son,
Which you'll need shortly! Did it never breed
Suspicion in you all was not pure profit,
When I, the insatiate . . . and so forth . . . was bent
On having an associate in my rule?
Why did I yield this Nuncio half the gain,
If not that I might also shift . . . what on him?
Half of the peril, Loÿs!
Loÿs. Peril?
Pref. Hark you!
I'd love you if you'd let me—this for reason,
You save my life at price of . . . well, say risk
At least, of yours. I came a long time since
To the Isle: our Hospitallers bade me tame
These savage wizards, and reward myself.
Loÿs. The Knights who so repudiate your crime?
Pref. Loÿs, the Knights—we doubtless understand
Each other; as for trusting to reward
From any friend beside myself . . . no, no!
I clutched mine on the spot, when it was sweet
And I had taste for it. I felt these wizards
Alive—was sure they were not on me, only
When I was on them: but with age comes caution:
And stinging pleasures please less and sting more.
Year by year, fear by fear! The girls were brighter
Than ever ('faith, there's yet one Anael left,
I set my heart upon)—Oh, prithee, let

That brave new sword lie still!—These joys were brighter,
But silenter the town too as I passed.
With this alcove's delicious memories
Yet to be mingled visions of gaunt fathers,
Quick-eyed sons, fugitives from the mine, the oar,
Stealing to catch me: brief, when I began
To quake with fear—(I think I hear the Chapter
Solicited to let me leave, now all
Worth staying for was gained and gone!)—I say
That when for the remainder of my life
All methods of escape seemed lost—just then
Up should a young hot-headed Loÿs spring,
Talk very long and loud, in fine, compel
The Knights to break their whole arrangement, have me
Home for pure shame—from this safehold of mine
Where but ten thousand Druses seek my life,
To my wild place of banishment, San Gines
By Murcia, where my three fat manors lying,
Purchased by gains here and the Nuncio's gold,
Are all I have to guard me,—that such fortune
Should fall to me I hardly could expect!
Therefore, I say, I'd love you!

Loÿs. Can it be?

I play into your hands then? Oh, no, no!
The Venerable Chapter, the Great Order
Sunk o' the sudden into fiends of the pit?
But I will back—will yet unveil you!

Pref. Me?

To whom?—perhaps Sir Galeas, who in Chapter
Shook his white head thrice—and some dozen times

My hand this morning shook for value paid?
To that Italian saint Sir Cosimo?—
Indignant at my wringing year by year
A thousand bezants from the coral-divers,
As you recounted; felt he not aggrieved?
Well might he—I allowed for his half share
Merely one hundred! To Sir . . .

Loÿs. See! you dare
Inculpate with whole Order; yet should I,
A youth, a sole voice, have the power to change
Their evil way had they been firm in it?
Answer me!

Pref. Oh, the son of Bretagne's Duke,
And that son's wealth, the father's influence, too,
And the young arm, we'll even say, my Loÿs,
—The fear of losing or diverting these
Into another channel by gainsaying
A novice too abruptly, could not influence
The Order! You might join, for aught they cared,
Their red-cross rivals of the Temple! Well,
I thank you for my part at all events!
Stay here till they withdraw you! You'll inhabit
This palace—sleep, perchance, in this alcove;
Good! and now disbelieve me if you can:
This is the first time for long years I enter
Thus [*lifts the arras*] without feeling just as if I lifted
The lid up of my tomb!

Loÿs. They share his crime!
God's punishment will overtake you yet!

Pref. Thank you it does not! Pardon this last flash:
I bear a graver visage presently

With the disinterested Nuncio here—
His purchase-money safe at Murcia too!
Let me repeat—for the first time no draught
Coming as from a sepulchre salutes me.
When we next meet, this folly may have passed,
We'll hope—Ha, ha! [*Exit thro' the arras.*
Loys. Assure me but—he's gone!
He could not lie! Then what have I escaped!
I, who have so nigh given up happiness
For ever, to be linked with him and them!
Oh, opportunest of discoveries! I
Their Knight? I utterly renounce them all!
Hark! What, he meets by this the Nuncio? Quick
To Djabal! I am one of them at last,
Those simple-hearted Druses—Anael's tribe!
Djabal! She's mine at last. Djabal, I say! [*Exit.*

ACT IV.

Enter DJABAL.

Dja. Let me but slay the Prefect—The end now!
To-morrow will be time enough to pry
Into the means I took: suffice, they served,
Ignoble as they were, to hurl revenge
True to its object. [*Seeing the robes, etc. disposed.*
. . . Mine should never so
Have hurried to accomplishment! Thee, Djabal,
Far other moods befitted! Calms the Robe
Should clothe this doom's awarder.
[*Taking the robe.*] Well, I dare
Assume my nation's Robe. I am at least
A Druse again—chill Europe's policy
Drops from me—I dare take the Robe: why not
The Tiar? I rule the Druses, and what more
Betokens it than rule?—yet—yet—[*Lays down the Tiar.*
[*Footsteps in the alcove.*] He comes!
[*Taking the sword.*
If the Sword serves, let the Tiar lie! So, feet
Clogged with the blood of twenty years can fall
Thus lightly! Round me, all ye ghosts! He'll lift . . .
Which arm to push the arras wide?—or both?
Stab from the neck down to the heart—there stay!
Near he comes—nearer—the next footstep! Now!
[*As he dashes aside the arras,* ANAEL *is discovered.*
Ha! Anael! Nay, my Anael, can it be?
Heard you the trumpet? I must slay him here,
And here you ruin all. Why speak you not?

Anael, the Prefect comes! [ANAEL *screams.*] So late to feel
'T is not a sight for you to look upon?
A moment's work—but such work! Till you go
I must be idle—idle, I risk all!
[*Pointing to her hair.*
Those locks are well, and you are beauteous thus,
But with the dagger 'tis I have to do!
An. Mine—Look!
Dja. Blood—Anael?
An. Djabal—'tis thy deed!
It must be—I had hoped to claim it mine—
Be worthy thee—but I must needs confess
'Twas not I, but thyself . . . not I have . . . Djabal!
Speak to me!
Dja. Oh my punishment!
An. Speak to me!
While I can speak—touch me—despite the blood!
When the command passed from thy soul to mine,
I went, fire leading me, muttering of thee,
And the approaching exaltation,—make
One sacrifice! I said,—and he sate there,
Bade me approach; and, as I did approach,
Thy fire with music burst into my brain—
'Twas but a moment's work, thou saidst—perchance
It may have been so—Well, it is thy deed!
Dja. It is my deed!
An. His blood all this!—this! and . .
And more—sustain me, Djabal—Wait not—now
Let flash thy glory! Change thyself and me!
It must be! Ere the Druses flock to us!

At least confirm me ! Djabal—blood gushed forth—
He was our Tyrant—but I looked he'd fall
Prone asleep—why else is Death called sleep ?
Sleep ? He bent o'er his neck—'Tis sin, I know,
Punish me, Djabal, but wilt thou let him ?
Be it thou that punishest, not he—who creeps
On his red breast—is here—'tis the small groan
Of a child—no worse ! Bestow the new life, then !
Too swift it cannot be, too strange, surpassing !
[*Following him up and down.*
Now ! Change us both ! Change me and change thou !
Dja. [*Sinks on his knees.*] Thus !
Behold my change ! You have done nobly ! I !—
An. Can Hakeem kneel ?
Dja. No Hakeem, but mere Djabal !
I have spoke falsely, and this woe is come.
No—hear me ere scorn blasts me ! Once and ever,
The deed is mine . . Oh think upon the Past !
An. [*To herself.*] (Did I strike once, or twice, or many times ?)
Dja. . . I came to lead my tribe where, bathed in glooms,
Doth Bahumid the Renovator sleep—
Anael—I saw my tribe—I said, " Without
A miracle this cannot be "—I said
" Be there a miracle ! "—for I saw you !
An. (His head lies south the portal !)
Dja. —To this end
What was I with my purity of soul ?
Little by little I engaged myself—
Heaven would accept me for its instrument

I hoped—I said it had accepted me!
An. Is it this blood breeds dreams in me? Who said
You were not Hakeem? And your miracles—
The fire that plays innocuous round your form?
[*Again changing her whole manner.*
Ah, you would try me—you are Hakeem still!
Dja. Woe—woe! As if the Druses of the Mount
(Scarce Arabs even there—but here, in the Isle,
Beneath their former selves) should comprehend
The subtle lore of Europe! A few secrets
That would not easily affect the meanest
Of the crowd there, could wholly subjugate
The best of our poor tribe! Again that eye?
An. [*After a pause springs to his neck.*] Djabal, in this there can be no deceit!
Why, Djabal, were you human only,—think,
Maäni is but human, Khalil human,
Loÿs is human even—did their words
Haunt me, their looks pursue me? Shame on you
So to have tried me! Rather, shame on me
So to need trying! Could I, with the Prefect
And the blood, there—could I see only you?
—Hang by your neck over this gulf of blood?
Speak, I am saved! Speak, Djabal! Am I saved?
[*As* DJABAL *slowly unclasps her arms, and puts her silently from him.*
Hakeem would save me! Thou art Djabal! Crouch!
Bow to the dust, thou basest of our kind!
The pile of thee I reared up to the cloud—
Full, midway, of our fathers' trophied tombs,
Based on the living rock, devoured not by

The unstable desert's jaws of sand,—falls prone!
Fire, music, quenched: and now thou liest there
A ruin obscene creatures will moan thro'!
—Let us come, Djabal!
Dja. Whither come?
An. At once—
Lest so it grow intolerable. Come!
Will I not share it with thee? Best at once!
So feel less pain! Let them deride—thy tribe
Now trusting in thee,—even Loÿs deride!
Come to them, hand in hand, with me!
Dja. Where come?
An. Where?—to the Druses thou hast wronged!
Confess
Now that the end is gained . . . (I love thee now)
That thou hast so deceived them . . (better love thee
Perchance than ever:) Come, receive their doom
Of infamy! . . . (Oh, best of all I love thee!
Shame with the man, no triumph with the God
Be mine!) Come!
Dja. Never! More shame yet? and why?
Why? You have called this deed mine—it is mine!
And with it I accept its circumstance—
How can I longer strive with Fate? The Past
Is past—my false life shall henceforth come true—
Hear me: the argosies touch land by this—
What if we reign together?—if we keep
Our secret for the Druses' good?—by means
Of their gross superstition plant in them
New life? I am from Europe: all who seek
Man's good must awe man: by such means as these,
We two will be divine to them—we are!

Let them conceive the rest—and I will keep them
Still safe in ignorance of all the past—
All great works in this world spring from the ruins
Of greater projects—ever, on our earth,
Babels men block out, Babylons they build.
I wrest the weapon from your hand! I claim
The deed! Retire! You have my ring—you bar
All access to the Nuncio till the forces
From Venice land!

An. You will feign Hakeem then?

Dja. [*Puts the Tiar of Hakeem on his head.*] And from this moment that I dare ope wide
Eyes that refused till now to see, begins
My true dominion! for I know myself,
And what I am to personate. No word?

[*Exit* ANAEL.

'Tis come on me at last! His blood on her——
Such memories will follow that! Her eye,
And her distorted lip and ploughed black brow—
Ah, fool! Has Europe then so poorly tamed
The Syrian blood from out thee? Thou presume
To work in this foul earth by means not foul?
Scheme, as for Heaven,—but, on the earth, be glad
If but a ray like Heaven's be left thee! Thus
I shall be calm—in readiness—no way
Surprised. [*A noise without.*
This should be Khalil and my Druses!
Venice is come then! Thus I grasp thee, sword!
Druses, 'tis Hakeem saves you! In! Behold
The Prefect!

Enter Loys. Djabal *hides the khandjar in his robe.*

Loys. Oh, well met, Djabal!—but he's close at hand.
You know who waits there? [*Points to the alcove.*
Well; and that 'tis there
He meets the Nuncio? Well! Now, a surprise—
He there—
Dja. I know—
Loys. ——is now no mortal's lord.
Is absolutely powerless—call him, dead—
He is no longer Prefect—you are Prefect!
Oh, shrink not! I do nothing in the dark,
Nothing unworthy Breton blood, believe!
I understood at once your urgency
That I should leave this isle for Rhodes—I felt
What you were loath to speak—your need of help;
I have fulfilled the task that earnestness
Imposed on me; have, face to face, confronted
The Prefect in full Chapter, charged on him
What you have told and I have seen; he stood
Mute, offered no defence, no crime denied;
On which I spoke of you and of your Druses'
Slight difference in faith from us . . . all you've urged
So oft to me—I spoke, too, of your goodness
And patience—brief, I hold henceforth the Isle
In charge, am nominally Prefect, but
You are associated in my rule—
You are the Prefect! Ay, such faith had they
In my assurance of your loyalty
(For who insults an imbecile old man?)

That we assume the Prefecture this hour!
You gaze at me! a greater wonder yet—
See me throw down this fabric I have built!
These Knights, I was prepared to worship . . . . but
Of that another time; what 's now to say
Is—I shall never be a Knight! Oh, Djabal,
Here first I throw all prejudice aside,
And call you brother! I am Druse like you!
My wealth, my friends, my power, are wholly yours,
Your people's, which is now my people—for
There is a maiden of your tribe I love—
She loves me—Khalil's sister——

Dja. Anael?

Loÿs. Start you?
What I say seems unknightly? Thus it chanced—
When first I came a novice to the Isle . . .

Enter one of the NUNCIO'S Guards *from the alcove.*

Guard. Oh, horrible! Sir Loys! Here is Loÿs!
Djabal! [*Others enter from the alcove.*
[*Pointing to* DJABAL.] Secure him, bind him—this
is he! [*They surround* DJABAL.

Loÿs. Madmen—what is't you do? Stand from my friend,
And tell me!

Guards. Thou canst have no part in this—
Surely no part—But slay him not! The Nuncio
Commanded, Slay him not!

Loÿs. Speak, or . . .

Guard. The Prefect
Lies murdered there by him thou dost embrace.

Loÿs. By Djabal? miserable fools! How Djabal?
[*A* Guard *lifts* DJABAL'S *robe;* DJABAL *flings down the khandjar.*
Loÿs. [*After a pause.*] Thou hast received some insult worse than all—
Some outrage not to be endured—
[*To the* Guards.] Stand back!
He is my friend—more than my friend! Thou hast
Slain him upon that provocation!
Guards. No!
No provocation! 'Tis a long devised
Conspiracy—the whole tribe is involved—
He is their Khalif—'tis on that pretence—
All is just now revealed, I know not how,
By one of his confederates—who, struck
With horror at this murder, has apprized
The Nuncio. As 'twas said we find this Djabal
Here where we take him.
Dja. [*Aside.*] Who breaks faith with me?
Loÿs. [*To* DJABAL.] Hear'st thou? Speak! Till thou speak I keep off these,
Or die with thee. Deny this story! Thou
A Khalif, an impostor? Thou, my friend,
Whose tale was of an inoffensive race.
With . . . but thou know'st—on that tale's truth I pledged
My faith before the Chapter: what art thou?
Dja. Loÿs, I am as thou hast heard. All 's true!
No more concealment! As these tell thee, all
Was long since planned. Our Druses are enough
To crush this handful: the Venetians land
Even now in our behalf. Loÿs, we part here!

Thou hast served much, would'st fain have served me more;
It might not be. I thank thee—As thou hearest,
We are a separated tribe: farewell!
Loÿs. Oh, where will truth be found now? Canst thou so
Belie the Druses?—This not thy sole crime?
Those thou professest of our Breton stock
Are partners with thee? Why I saw but now
Khalil my friend—he spoke with me—no word
Of this! and Anael—whom I love, and who
Loves me—she spoke no word of this!
Dja. Poor Boy!
Anael who loves thee? Khalil fast thy friend?
We, offsets from a wandering Count of Dreux?
No—older than the oldest—princelier
Than Europe's princeliest tribe are we.—Enough
For thee that on our simple faith we found
A monarchy to shame your monarchies
At their own trick and secret of success.
The child of this our tribe shall laugh upon
The palace-step of him whose life ere night
Is forfeit—as that child shall know—and yet
Shall laugh there! What, we Druses wait forsooth
The kind interposition of a boy?
—Can only save ourselves when thou concedest?
—Khalil admire thee? He is my right hand,
My delegate!—Anael accept thy love?
She is my Bride!
Loÿs. Thy Bride? She one of them?
Dja. My Bride!
Loÿs. And she retains her glorious eyes!

She, with those eyes, has shared this miscreant's guilt!
Ah—who but she directed me to find
Djabal within the Prefect's chamber? Khalil
Bade me seek Djabal there! Too true it is!
What spoke the Prefect worse of them than this?
Did the Church ill to institute long since
Perpetual warfare with such serpentry
As these? Have I desired to shift my part,
Evade my share in her design? 'Tis well!

Dja. Loÿs, I have wronged thee—but unwittingly.
I never thought there was in thee a virtue
That could attach itself to what thou deemest
A race below thine own. I wronged thee, Loÿs,
But that is over. All is over now,
Save the protection I ensure against
My people's anger—by their Khalif's side
Thou art secure and may'st depart: so, come!

Loÿs. Thy side?—I take protection at thy hand?

Enter other Guards.

Guards. Fly with him! Fly, my Master! 'Tis too true!
And only by his side thou may'st escape —
The whole tribe is in full revolt—they flock
About the palace—will be here—on thee—
And there are twenty of us, with the Guards
Of the Nuncio, to withstand them! Fly—below
The Nuncio stands aghast. At least let us
Escape their wrath, O Hakeem! We are nought
In thy tribe's persecution! [*To* Loÿs.] Keep by him

He is their God, they shout, and at his beck
Are life and death !

Loÿs [*Springing at the khandjar* DJABAL *had thrown down seizes him by the throat.*]

Thus by his side am I !
Thus I resume my knighthood and its warfare !
Thus end thee, miscreant, in thy pride of place !
Thus art thou caught ! Without, thy dupes may cluster,
Friends aid thee, foes avoid thee,—thou art Khalif,
How say they?—God art thou ! but also here
Is the least, meanest, youngest the Church calls
Her servant, and his single arm avails
To aid her as she lists. I rise, and thou
Art crushed ! Hordes of thy Druses flock without ;
Here thou hast me who represent the Cross,
Honour and Faith, 'gainst Hell, Mahound, and thee !
Die ! [DJABAL *remains calm.*

Implore my mercy, Khalif, that my scorn
May help me ! Nay—I cannot ply thy trade—
I am no Druse—no stabber—and thine eye,
Thy form, are too much as they were—my friend
Had such ! Speak ! Beg for mercy at my foot !

[DJABAL *still silent.*

Heaven could not ask so much of me—not sure
So much ! I cannot kill him so !

Thou art
Strong in thy cause then ! Dost outbrave us, then !
Heard'st thou that one of thine accomplices,
Thy very people, has accused thee ? Meet
His charge ! Thou hast not even slain the Prefect
As thy own vile creed warrants. Meet that charge—
Come with me and disprove him—be thou tried

By him, nor seek appeal—this promise me—
Or I will do God's office! What, shalt thou
Boast of assassins at thy beck, yet Truth
Want even an executioner? Consent,
Or I will strike—look in my face—I will!

Dja. Give me again my khandjar, if thou darest!

[Loÿs *gives it.*

Let but one Druse accuse me, and I plunge
This home. A Druse betray me? Let us go!
[*Aside.*] Who has betrayed me? [*Shouts without.*
Hearest thou? I hear
No plainer now than years ago I heard
That shout—but in no dream now! They return!
Wilt thou be leader with me, Loÿs? Well!

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

The Uninitiated Druses, *covering the stage tumultuously, and speaking together.*

Here flock we, obeying the summons. Lo, Hakeem hath appeared, and the Prefect is dead, and we return to Lebanon! My manufacture of goats' fleece must, I doubt, soon fall away there—Come, old Nasif—link thine arm in mine—we fight if needs be—Come, what is a great fight-word? Lebanon? (My daughter—my daughter!)—But is Khalil to have the office of Hamza?—Nay, rather if he be wise, the monopoly of henna and cloves—Where is Hakeem?—The only prophet I ever saw, prophesied at Cairo once in my youth—a little black Copht, dressed all in black too, with a great stripe of yellow cloth flapping down behind him like the back-fin of a water-serpent. Is this he? Biamrallah! Biamreh! HAKEEM!

Enter the NUNCIO *with* Guards.

Nuncio. [*To his* Attendants.] Hold both, the sorcerer and this accomplice
Ye talk of, that accuseth him! And tell
Sir Loÿs he is mine, the Church's hope!
Bid him approve himself our Knight indeed!
Lo, this black disemboguing of the Isle!
[*To the* Druses.] Ah, Children, what a sight for these old eyes
That kept themselves alive this voyage through

To smile their very last on you! I came
To gather one and all you wandering sheep
Into my fold, as tho' a father came . . .
As tho', in coming, a father should . . .
[*To his* Guards.] (Ten, twelve,
Twelve guards of you, and not an outlet? None?
The wizards stop each avenue? Keep close!)
[*To the* Druses.] As if one came to a son's house, I say,
So did I come—no guard with me—to find . .
Alas—Alas!
A Druse. Who is the old man?
Another. Oh, ye are to shout!
Children, he styles you.
Druses. Ay, the Prefect's slain!
Glory to the Khalif, our Father!
Nuncio. Even so!
I find, ye prompt aright, your Father slain;
While most he plotted for your good, that father
(Alas! how kind ye never knew)—lies slain—
[*Aside.*] (And Hell's worm gnaw the glozing knave—with me
For being duped by his cajoleries!
Are these the Christians? These the docile crew
My bezants went to make me Bishop o'er?)
[*To his* Attendants, *who whisper.*] What say ye does this wizard style himself?
Hakeem? Biamrallah? The third Fatemite?
What is this jargon? He—the insane Khalif,
Dead near three hundred years ago, come back
In flesh and blood again?
Druses. He mutters! Hear ye?

He is blaspheming Hakeem—the old man
Is our dead Prefect's friend! Tear him!
Nuncio. Ye dare not!
I stand here with my five-and-sixty years,
The Patriarch's power behind, and God's above me!
Those years have witnessed sin enough; ere now
Misguided men arose against their lords,
And found excuse; but ye, to be enslaved
By sorceries—cheats;—alas! the same tricks tried
On my poor children in this nook of the earth
Could triumph,—that have been successively
Exploded, laughed to scorn, all nations thro'—
"*Romaioi, Ioudaioite kai proselutoi,*
Cretes and Arabians"—you are duped the last!
Said I, refrain from tearing me? I pray ye
Tear me! Shall I return to tell the Patriarch
That so much love was wasted—every gift
Rejected, from his benizon I brought,
Down to that galley-full of bezants, sunk
An hour since at the harbour's mouth, by that . . .
That . . . never will I speak his hated name!
[*To his* Servants.] What was the name his fellow slip-fetter
Called their arch-wizard by? [*They whisper.*] One Djabal was't?
Druses. But how a sorcerer? false wherein?
Nuncio. (Ay, Djabal!)
How false? Ye know not Djabal has confessed . . .
Nay, that by tokens found on him we learn . . .
What I sailed hither solely to divulge—
How by his spells the demons were allured

To seize you—not that these be aught save lies
And mere illusions—is this clear? I say,
By measures such as these he would have led you
Into a monstrous ruin—follow ye?
Say, shall ye perish for his sake, my sons?
Druses. Hark ye!
Nuncio. —Be of one privilege amerced?
No! Infinite the Patriarch's mercies be!
No! With the Patriarch's license, still I bid
Tear him to pieces who misled you! Haste!
Druses. The old man's beard shakes, and his eyes are white! After all, I know nothing of Djabal beyond what Karshook says, he knows but what Khalil says, who knows just what Djabal says himself—Now the little Copht Prophet I saw at Cairo in my youth began by promising each bystander . . .

Enter KHALIL *and the initiated* Druses.

Kha. Venice and her deliverance are at hand!
Their fleet stands thro' the harbour! Hath he slain
The Prefect yet? Is Djabal's change come yet?
Nuncio. [*To* Attendants.] What 's this of Venice?
Who 's this boy?
[Attendants *whisper.*] One Khalil?
Djabal's accomplice, Loÿs called but now
The only Druse save Djabal's self to fear?
[*To the* Druses.] I cannot hear ye with these aged ears . . .
Is it so? Ye would have my troops assist?
Doth he abet him in his sorceries?

Down with the cheat, guards, as my children bid !
[*They spring at* KHALIL—*as he beats them back.*
Stay—no more bloodshed !—spare deluded youth !
Whom seek'st thou ? (I will teach him)—Whom, my child ?
Thou knowest not what these know, and just have told.
I am an old man, as thou seest—have done
With earth, and what should move me but the truth ?
Art thou the only fond one of thy tribe ?
'Tis I interpret for thy tribe !
Kha. Oh, this
Is the expected Nuncio ! Druses, hear—
Endure ye this ? Unworthy to partake
The glory Hakeem gains you ! Why, by this
The ships touch land—who makes for Lebanon ?
They'll plant the winged lion in these halls !
Nuncio. (If it be true ! Venice ?—Oh, never true !
Yet, Venice would so gladly thwart the Knights,
And fain get footing here so close by Rhodes !
Oh, to be duped this way !)
Kha. Ere he appears
To lead you gloriously, repent, I say !
Nuncio. Oh, any way to stretch the arch-wizard stark
Ere the Venetians come ! Were he cut off
The rest were easily tamed.) He ? Bring him forth !
Since so you needs will have it, I assent !
You'd judge him, say you, on the spot ? Confound
The sorcerer in his very circle ? Where's

Our short black-bearded sallow friend who said
He'd earn the Patriarch's guerdon by one stab?
Bring Djabal forth at once!

Druses. Ay, bring him forth!

The Patriarch drives a trade in oil and silk—
And we're the Patriarch's children—true men, we!
Where is the glory? Show us all the glory!

Kha. You dare not so insult him! What, not see . .
(I tell thee, Nuncio, these are uninstructed,
Untrusted—they know nothing of our Khalif!)
—Not see that if he lets a doubt arise
'Tis but to give yourselves the chance of seeming
To have some influence in your own return!
That all may say they would have trusted him
Without the all-convincing glory—ay
And did! Embrace the occasion, friends! For, think—
What merit when his change takes place? But now,
For your sakes he should not reveal himself!
No—could I ask and have. I would not ask
The change yet!

Enter Djabal *and* Loÿs.

Spite of all, reveal thyself!
I had said pardon them for me—for Anael—
For our sakes pardon these besotted men—
Ay—for thine own—they hurt not thee! Yet now
One thought swells in me and keeps down all else!
This Nuncio couples shame with thee, has called
Imposture thy whole course, all bitter things
Has said—he is but an old fretful man!

Hakeem—nay, I must call thee Hakeem now—
Reveal thyself! See, Druses! (Anael?) See!
Loÿs. [*To* DJABAL.] Here are thy people! Keep thy word to me!
Dja. Who of my people hath accused his Khalif?
Nuncio. So, this is Djabal, Hakeem, and what not?
A fit deed, Loÿs, for thy first Knight's day!
May it be augury of thy after life!
Ever be truncheon of the Church as now
That, Nuncio of the Patriarch, having charge
Of the Isle here, I claim thee [*turning to* DJABAL] as these bid me,
Forfeit for murder done thy lawful prince!
Why should I hold thee from their hands? (Spells, children?
But hear how I dispose of all his spells!)
Thou art a Prophet?—would'st entice thy tribe
Away?—thou workest miracles? (Attend!
Let him but move me with his spells!) I, Nuncio . . .
Dja. . . Which how thou cam'st to be, I say not now,
Though I have also been at Stamboul, Luke!
—Ply thee, Luke Mystocthydi, with my spells?
If Venice, in her Admiral's person, choose
To ratify thy compact with her foe,
The Hospitallers, for this Isle—withdraw
Her warrant of the deed which reinstates
My people in its freedom, tricked away
By him I slew,—refuse to convoy us
Afar to Lebanon at price of the Isle,
—Then time to try what miracles may do!
Dost thou dispute the Republic's power?

Nuncio. Lo ye!
No! The renowned Republic was and is
The Patriarch's friend: 'Tis not for courting Venice
That I—that these implore thy blood of me!
Lo ye, the subtle miscreant! Ha, so subtle?
Ye, Druses, hear him! Will ye be deceived?
How he evades me! Where 's the miracle
He works? I bid him to the proof—fish up
Your galley-full of bezants that he sunk!
That were a miracle! One miracle!
Enough of trifling, for it chafes my age—
I am the Nuncio, Druses! I stand here
To save you from the good Republic's wrath
When she shall find her fleet was summoned just
To aid the mummeries of this wizard here!
[*As the* Druses *hesitate, his* Attendants *whisper.*
Ah, well suggested! Why, we hold this while
One, who, his close confederate till now,
Confesses Djabal at the last a cheat,
And every miracle a cheat! Who throws me
His head? I make three offers, once I offer,—
And twice . . .
Dja. Let who moves perish at my foot?
Kha. Thanks, Hakeem, thanks! Oh, Anael, Maäni,
Why tarry they?
Druses. [*To each other.*] He can! He can! Live fire—
[*To the* Nuncio.] (I say he can, old man! Thou know'st him not.)
Live fire plays round him — See! The change begins?

Look not at me! It was not I!

Dja. What Druse
Accuseth me, as he saith? I bid each bone
Crumble within that Druse! None, Loÿs, none
Of my own people, as thou saidst, have raised
A voice against me.

Nuncio. [*Aside.*] Venice to come! Death!

Dja. [*Continuing.*] Now speak and go unscathed, how false soe'er!
Seest thou my Druses, Luke? I would submit
To thy pure malice did one least Druse speak!
How said I, Loÿs?

Nuncio. [*To his* Attendants, *who whisper.*] Ah, ye counsel so?
[*Aloud.*] Bring in the witness then who, first of all,
Told this man's treasons! Now I have thee, Djabal!
Ye hear that? If one speaks, he bids you tear him
Joint after joint—well then, one does speak! One,
Whom I have not as yet e'en spoken with,
But who hath voluntarily proposed
To expiate, by confessing thus, the fault
Of having trusted him. [*They bring in a veiled* Druse.

Loÿs. Now Djabal, now!

Nuncio. Friend, Djabal fronts you! (Make a ring, sons!—say
The course of Djabal; what he was, and how;
The wiles he used, the aims he cherished all;
Explicitly as late you spoke to these!

Loÿs. Thou hast the dagger ready, Djabal?

Dja. Speak,
Recreant!

Druses. Stand back, fool! farther! Suddenly
You shall see some huge serpent glide from under
The empty vest—or down will thunder crash!
Back, Khalil!

Kha. I go back? Thus go I back!

[*To* ANAEL.] Unveil! Nay, thou shalt face the Khalif!
Thus!

[*He tears away* ANAEL'S *veil:* DJABAL *folds his arms and bows his head: the* Druses *fall back:* LOŸS *springs from the side of* DJABAL *and the* NUNCIO.

Loÿs. Then she was true—she only of them all!
True to her eyes—may keep those glorious eyes
And now be mine, once again mine! Oh, Anael—
Dared I think thee a partner in his crime?
That blood could soil that hand—nay, 'tis mine—
Anael,
Mine now? Who offer thee before all these
My heart, my sword, my name—so thou wilt say
This Djabal, who affirms thou art his bride,
Lies—say but that he lies!

Dja. Thou, Anael?

Loÿs. Nay, Djabal, nay, one chance for me—the last!
Thou hast had every other—thou hast spoken
Days, nights, what falsehood listed thee—let me
Speak first—I will speak—Anael—

Nuncio. Loÿs, pause!
Thou art the Duke's son, Breton's choicest stock—
Loÿs de Dreux—God's sepulchre's first sword—
This wilt thou spit on, this degrade—this trample
To earth!

Loÿs. Ah, who had said, "One day this Loÿs
"Will stake these gifts against some other good
"In the whole world?"—I give them thee! I would
My strong will might bestow real shape on them,
That I might see, with my own eyes, thy foot
Tread on their very neck! 'Tis not by gifts
I put aside this Djabal—we will stand . . .
We do stand—see—two men! Djabal, stand forth!
Who 's worth her—I or thou? I—who for Anael
Kept tamely, soberly my way, the long
True way—left thee each by-path—kept
Without the lies and blood,—or thou, or thou?
Come out of this blood! Love me, Anael, leave him!
[*To* DJABAL.] Now speak—now, quick upon what I have said,
Thou with the blood, speak if thou art a man!
Dja. [*To* ANAEL.] Ah, was it thou betrayedst me? Then, speak!
'Tis well—I have deserved this—I submit—
Nor 'tis much evil thou inflictest—life
Ends here. The cedars shall not wave for us—
For there was crime, and must be punishment.
See fate! By thee I was seduced—by thee
I perish—yet do I, can I repent!
I, with an Arab instinct thwarted ever
By my Frank policy,—and, in its turn,
A Frank brain, thwarted by my Arab heart—
While these remained in equipoise I lived
Nothing; had either been predominant,
As a Frank schemer or an Arab mystic,

I had been something;—now, each has destroyed
The other—and behold from out their crash
A third and better nature rises up—
My mere Man's-nature! And I yield to it—
I love thee—I—who did not love before!
An. Djabal—
Dja.... How could I love while thou adoredest me?
Now thou despisest, art above me so
Immeasurably—thou, no other, doomest
My death now—this my steel shall execute
Thy judgment—I shall feel thy hand in it!
Oh, luxury to worship, to submit,
To be transcended, doomed to death by thee!
An. My Djabal!
Dja. Dost hesitate? I force thee then! Approach!
Druses! for I am out of reach of fate;
No further evil can befall me—Speak!
Hear, Druses, and hear, Nuncio, and hear, Loÿs!
An. HAKEEM!

[*She falls dead. The* Druses *scream, grovelling before him.*

Druses. Ah Hakeem!—not on me thy wrath!
Biamrallah, pardon!—never doubted I!
Ha, dog, how sayest thou?

[*They seize and surround the* NUNCIO *and his* Guards. LOŸS *flings himself upon the body of* ANAEL, *on which* DJABAL *continues to gaze as stupefied.*

Nuncio. Caitives! Have ye eyes?
Whips, racks should teach you! What, his fools? his dupes?
Leave me! Unhand me!

Kha. [*Approaching* DJABAL *timidly.*] Save her for
my sake!
She was already thine—she would have shared
To-day thine exaltation—think! this day
Her hair was plaited thus because of thee—
Yes, feel the soft bright hair—feel!
Nuncio. [*Struggling with those who have seized him.*]
What, because
His leman dies for him? You think it hard
To die? Oh, would you were at Rhodes, and choice
Of deaths should suit you!
Kha. [*Bending over* ANAEL'S *body.*] Just restore her
life!
So little does it! there—the eyelids tremble!
'Twas not my breath that made them—and the lips
Move of themselves—I could restore her life!
Hakeem, we have forgotten—have presumed
On our free converse—we are better taught.
See, I kiss—how I kiss thy garment's hem
For her! She kisses it—Oh, take her deed
In mine—Thou dost believe now, Anael?—See
She smiles! Was her lip ope thus o'er the teeth
When first I spoke? She doth believe in thee!
Go not without her to the cedars, Hakeem!
Or leave us both—I cannot go alone—
I have obeyed thee, if I must say so—
Hath Hakeem thus forgot all Djabal knew?
Thou feelest then my tears fall hot and fast
Upon thy hand—and yet thou speakest not?
Ere the Venetian trumpet sound—ere thou
Exalt thyself, O Hakeem! save her—save her!
Nuncio. And the accursed Republic will arrive

And find me in their toils—dead, very like,
Under their feet!
What way—not one way yet
To foil them? None? [*Observing* DJABAL'S *face.*
What ails the Khalif? Ah,
That ghastly face—a way to foil them yet!
[*To the* Druses.] Look to your Khalif, Druses! Is
that face
A Khalif's? Where is triumph—where is . . . what
Said he of exaltation—hath he promised
So much to-day? Why then exalt thyself?
Cast off that husk, thy form, set free thy soul
In splendour: now bear witness—here I stand—
I challenge him exalt himself, and I
Become, for that, a Druse like all of you!
The Druses. Exalt thyself—exalt thyself, O Hakeem!
Dja. [*Advances.*] I can confess now all from first to
last.
There is no longer shame for me. I am . . .
[*Here the Venetian trumpet sounds—the* Druses
shout, his eye catches the expression of
those about him, and, as the old dream
comes back, he is again confident and in-
spired.
. . . Am I not Hakeem? And ye would have crawled
But yesterday within these impure courts
Where now ye stand erect! Not grand enough?
—What more could be conceded to such beasts
As all of you, so sunk and base as you,
But a mere man?—A man among such beasts
Was miracle enough—yet him you doubt,
Him you forsake, him fain would you destroy—

With the Venetians at your gate, the Nuncio
Thus—(see the baffled hypocrite !) and best
The Prefect there !

Druses. No, Hakeem, ever thine !

Nuncio. He lies—and twice he lies—and thrice he lies !

Exalt thyself, Mahound ! Exalt thyself !

Dja. Druses ! we shall henceforth be far away !
Out of mere mortal ken—above the cedars—
But we shall see ye go—hear ye return—
Repeopling the old solitudes,—thro' thee,
My Khalil ! Thou art full of me—I fill
Thee full—my hands thus fill thee ! Yester' eve,
—Nay, but this morn—I deemed thee ignorant
Of all to do, requiring words of mine
To teach it—now, thou hast all gifts in one,
With truth and purity go other gifts !
All gifts come clustering to that—go lead
My people home whate'er betide !
[*Turning to the Druses.*] Ye take
This Khalil for my delegate ? To him
Bow as to me ? He leads to Lebanon—
Ye follow ?

Druses. We follow ! Now exalt thyself !

Dja. [*Raises* Loÿs.] Then to thee, Loÿs ! How have I wronged thee, Loÿs !
Yet, wronged, no less thou shalt have full revenge,
Fit for thy noble self, revenge—and thus :
Thou, loaded with these wrongs, the princely soul,
The first sword of Christ's sepulchre—thou shalt
Guard Khalil and my Druses home again !
Justice, no less—God's justice and no more,

For those I leave !—to seeking this, devote
Some few days out of thy Knight's brilliant life,
And, this obtained them, leave their Lebanon,
My Druses' blessing in thine ears—(they shall
Bless thee a blessing sure to have its way)
—One cedar-blossom in thy ducal cap,
One thought of Anael in thy heart—perchance,
One thought of him who thus, to bid thee speed,
His last word to the living speaks ! This done,
Resume thy course, and, first amid the first
In Europe, take my heart along with thee !
Go boldly, go serenely, go augustly—
What can withstand thee then ?

[*He bends over* ANAEL.] And last to thee !
Ah, did I dream I was to have this day
Exalted thee ? A vain dream—hast thou not
Won greater exaltation ? What remains
But press to thee, exalt myself to thee ?
Thus I exalt myself, set free my soul !

[*He stabs himself. As he falls, supported by* KHALIL *and* LOŸS, *the* Venetians *enter : the* ADMIRAL *advances.*

Admiral. God and St. Mark for Venice ! Plant the Lion !

[*At the clash of the planted standard, the* Druses *shout, and move tumultuously forward,* LOŸS *drawing his sword.*

Dja. [*Leading them a few steps between* KHALIL *and* LOYS.] On to the Mountain ! At the Mountain, Druses ! [*Dies.*

A BLOT IN THE 'SCUTCHEON.

THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE,

FEBRUARY 11, 1843.

PERSONS.

MILDRED TRESHAM	*Miss Helen Faucit.*
GUENDOLEN TRESHAM	*Mrs. Stirling.*
THOROLD, Lord Tresham . . .	*Mr. Phelps.*
AUSTIN TRESHAM	,, *Hudson.*
HENRY, Earl Mertoun	,, *Anderson.*
GERARD	,, *G. Bennett.*

Other Retainers of Lord Tresham.

TIME. 17—.

A Blot in the 'Scutcheon.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The interior of a Lodge in* LORD TRESHAM'S *Park. Many* Retainers *crowded at the window, supposed to command a view of the entrance to his Mansion.* GERARD, *the Warrener, sitting alone, his back to a table on which are flagons, etc.*

1.

AY—do—push, friends, and then you'll push down me.
—What for? Does any hear a runner's foot,
Or a steed's trample, or a coach-wheel's cry?
Is the Earl come or his least poursuivant?
But there 's no breeding in a man of you
Save Gerard yonder: here 's a half-place yet,
Old Gerard!

Ger. Save your courtesies, my friend.
Here is my place.

2. Now, Gerard, out with it!
What makes you sullen this of all the days
I' the year? To-day that young, rich, bountiful,
Handsome Earl Mertoun, whom alone they match
With our Lord Tresham thro' the country-side,

Is coming here in utmost bravery
To ask our Master's Sister's hand?
Ger. What then?
2. What then? Why, you she speaks to, if she meets
Your worship, smiles on as you hold apart
The boughs to let her thro' her forest walks,
You, always favourite for your no-deserts,
You've heard these three days how Earl Mertoun sues
To lay his heart, and house, and broad lands too,
At Lady Mildred's feet—and while we squeeze
Ourselves into a mousehole lest we miss
One congee of the least page in his train,
You sit o' one side—"there's the Earl," say I—
"What then," say you!
3. I'll wager he has let
Both swans he tamed for Lady Mildred, swim
Over the falls and gain the river!
Ger. Ralph,
Is not to-morrow my inspecting-day
For you and for your hawks?
4. Let Gerard be!
He's cross-grained, like his carved black crossbow stock.
Ha, look now, while we squabble with him, look!
Well done, now—is not this beginning, now,
To purpose?
1. Our retainers look as fine—
That's comfort! Lord, how Richard holds himself
With his white staff! Will not a knave behind
Prick him upright?
4. He's only bowing, fool!

The Earl's man bent us lower by this much.

1. That 's comfort. Here 's a very cavalcade!

3. I don't see wherefore Richard, and his troop
Of silk and silver varlets there, should find
Their perfumed selves so indispensable
On high days, holy days! Would it so disgrace
Our Family, if I, for instance, stood—
In my right hand a cast of Swedish hawks,
A leash of greyhounds in my left?

Ger. With Hugh
The logman for supporter—in his right
The bill-hook—in his left the brushwood shears.

3. Out on you, crab! What next, what next? The Earl!

1. O, Walter, groom, our horses, do they match
The Earl's? Alas, that first pair of the six—
They paw the ground—Ah, Walter! and that brute
Just on his haunches by the wheel!

6. Ay—Ay!
You, Philip, are a special hand, I hear,
At soups and sauces—what 's a horse to you?
D'ye mark that beast they've slid into the midst
So cunningly?—then, Philip, mark this further;
No leg has he to stand on!

1. No? That 's comfort.

2. Peace, Cook. The Earl descends.—Well, Gerard, see
The Earl at least! Come, there 's a proper man,
I hope! Why, Ralph, no falcon, Pole or Swede,
Has got a starrier eye—

3. His eyes are blue—
But leave my hawks alone!

4. So young, and yet
So tall and shapely!
5. Here 's Lord Tresham's self!
There now—there 's what a nobleman should be!
He 's older, graver, loftier, he 's more like
A House's Head!
2. But you'd not have a boy
—And what 's the Earl beside?—possess too soon
That stateliness?
1. Our Master takes his hand—
Richard and his white staff are on the move—
Back fall our people—(tsh!—there 's Timothy
Sure to get tangled in his ribbon-ties—
And Peter 's cursed rosette 's a-coming off!)
—At last I see our Lord's back and his friend's—
And the whole beautiful bright company
Close round them—in they go!
[*Jumping down from the window-bench, and making for the table and its jugs, etc.*
Good health, long life,
Great joy to our Lord Tresham and his House!
6. My father drove his father first to court
After his marriage-day—ay, did he!
2. God bless
Lord Tresham, Lady Mildred, and the Earl!
Here, Gerard, reach your beaker!
Ger. Drink, my boys:
Don't mind me—all 's not right about me—drink.
2. [*Aside.*] He 's vexed, now, that he let the show escape!
[*To* Ger.] Remember that the Earl returns this way—
Ger. That way?

2. Just so.
Ger. Then my way 's here. [*Exit.*
2. Old Gerard
Will die soon—mind I said it : he was used
To care about the pitifullest thing
That touched the House's honor—not an eye
But his could see wherein—and on a cause
Of scarce a quarter this importance, Gerard
Fairly had fretted flesh and bone away
In cares that this was right, nor that was wrong,
Such a point decorous, and such by rule—
(He knew such niceties, no herald more)
And now—you see his humour—die he will !
2. God help him ! Who 's for the great servants' hall
To hear what 's going on inside ? They'd follow
Lord Tresham into the saloon.
3. I !—
4. I !—
Leave Frank alone for catching, at the door,
Some hint of how the parley goes inside !
Prosperity to the great House once more—
Here 's the last drop !
1. Have at you ! Boys, hurrah !
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Saloon in the Mansion.*

Enter LORD TRESHAM, LORD MERTOUN; AUSTIN, *and* GUENDOLEN.

Tresh. I welcome you, Lord Mertoun, yet once more,
To this ancestral roof of mine. Your name
—Noble among the noblest in itself,
Yet taking in your person, fame avers,
New price and lustre,—(as that gem you wear,
Transmitted from a thousand knightly breasts,
Fresh chased and set and fixed by its last lord,
Seems to re-kindle at the core)—your name
Would win you welcome!

Mer. Thanks!

Tresh. But add to that,
The worthiness and grace and dignity
Of your proposal for uniting both
Our Houses even closer than respect
Unites them now—add these, and you must grant
One favour more, nor that the least,—to think
The welcome I should give;—'tis given! My lord,
My only brother, Austin—he 's the King's.
Our cousin, Lady Guendolen—betrothed
To Austin: all are yours.

Mer. I thank you—less
For the expressed commendings which your seal,
And only that, authenticates—forbids
My putting from me . . to my heart I take
Your praise . . but praise less claims my gratitude

Than the indulgent insight it implies
Of what must needs be uppermost with one
Who comes, like me, with the bare leave to ask
In weighed and measured unimpassioned words
A gift, which if as quietly denied,
He must withdraw, content upon his cheek,
Despair within his soul:—that I dare ask
Firmly, near boldly, near with confidence
That gift, I have to thank you for. Lord Tresham,
I love your sister—as you'd have one love
That lady . . oh more, more I love her. Wealth,
Rank, all the world thinks *me*, they're yours, you know,
To hold or part with, at your choice—but grant
My true self, *me* without a rood of land,
A piece of gold, a name of yesterday,
Grant me that lady and you . . . Death or life?

Guen. [*Apart to* Aus.] Why, this *is* loving, Austin!

Aus. He's so young!

Guen. Young? Old enough, I think, to half surmise
He never had obtained an entrance here
Were all this fear and trembling needed.

Aus. Hush!
He reddens.

Guen. Mark him, Austin, that's true love!
Ours must begin again.

Tresh. We'll sit, my lord.
Ever with best desert goes diffidence.
I may speak plainly nor be misconceived.
That I am wholly satisfied with you
On this occasion, when a falcon's eye
Were dull compared with mine to search out faults,
Is somewhat. Mildred's hand is hers to give

Or to refuse.
Mer. But you, you grant my suit?
I have your word if hers?
Tresh. My best of words
If hers encourage you. I trust it will.
Have you seen Lady Mildred, by the way?
Mer. I . . I . . our two demesnes, remember, touch—
I have been used to wander carelessly
After my stricken game—the heron roused
Deep in my woods has trailed its broken wing
Thro' thicks and glades a mile in yours,—or else
Some eyass ill-reclaimed has taken flight
And lured me after her from tree to tree,
I marked not whither . . I have come upon
The Lady's wondrous beauty unaware,
And—and then . . I have seen her.
Guen. [*Aside to* Aus.] Note that mode
Of faultering out that when a lady passed
He, having eyes, did see her! You had said—
"On such a day I scanned her head to foot;
"Observed a red, where red should not have been,
"Outside her elbow, but was pleased enough
"Upon the whole." Let such irreverent talk
Be lessoned for the future!
Tresh. What 's to say
May be said briefly. She has never known
A mother's care; I stand for father too—
Her beauty is not strange to you it seems—
You cannot know the good and tender heart,
Its girl's trust, and its woman's constancy,
How pure yet passionate, how calm yet kind,

How grave yet joyous, how reserved yet free
As light where friends are—how embued with lore
The world most prizes, yet the simplest, yet
The . . one might know I talked of Mildred—thus
We brothers talk!

Mer. I thank you.

Tresh. In a word,
Control 's not for this lady; but her wish
To please me outstrips in its subtlety
My power of being pleased—herself creates
The want she means to satisfy. My heart
Prefers your suit to her as 'twere its own.
Can I say more?

Mer. No more—thanks, thanks—no more!

Tresh. This matter then discussed . . .

Mer. . . We'll waste no breath
On aught less precious—I'm beneath the roof
That holds her: while I thought of that, my speech
To you would wander—as it must not do,
Since as you favour me I stand or fall.
I pray you suffer that I take my leave!

Tresh. With less regret 'tis suffered, that again
We meet, I hope, so shortly.

Mer. We? again?—
Ah yes, forgive me—when shall . . you will crown
Your goodness by forthwith apprising me
When . . if . . the Lady will appoint a day
For me to wait on you—and her.

Tresh. So soon
As I am made acquainted with her thoughts
On your proposal—howsoe'er they lean—
A messenger shall bring you the result.

Mer. You cannot bind me more to you, my lord.
Farewell till we renew . . I trust, renew
A converse ne'er to disunite again.
Tresh. So may it prove!
Mer. You, Lady, you, Sir, take
My humble salutation!
Guen. and Aus. Thanks!
Tresh. Within there!

Servants *enter.* TRESHAM *conducts* MERTOUN *to the door. Meantime* AUSTIN *remarks,*

Well,
Here I have an advantage of the Earl,
Confess now; *I*'d not think that all was safe
Because my lady's brother stood my friend.
Why, he makes sure of her—"do you say, yes—
"She'll not say, no"—what comes it to beside?
I should have prayed the brother, "speak this speech,
"For Heaven's sake urge this on her—put in this—
"Forget not, as you'd save me, t'other thing,—
"Then set down what she says, and how she looks,
"And if she smiles," and, in an under breath,
"Only let her accept me, and do you
"And all the world refuse me if you dare!"
Guen. That way you'd take, friend Austin? What a shame
I was your cousin, tamely from the first
Your bride, and all this fervour 's run to waste!
Do you know you speak sensibly to-day?
The Earl 's a fool.
Aus. Here 's Thorold. Tell him so!

Tresh. [*Returning.*] Now, voices, voices! 'St! the lady's first!
How seems he?—seems he not . . come, faith give fraud
The mercy-stroke whenever they engage!
Down with fraud—up with faith! How seems the Earl?
A name! a blazon! if you knew their worth,
As you will never! come—the Earl?
Guen. He 's young.
Tresh. What 's she? an infant save in heart and brain.
Young! Mildred is fourteen, remark! And you . .
Austin, how old is she?
Guen. There 's tact for you!
I meant that being young was good excuse
If one should tax him . .
Tresh. Well?
Guen. —With lacking wit.
Tresh. He lacked wit? Where might he lack wit, so please you?
Guen. In standing straiter than the steward's rod
And making you the tiresomest harangues,
Instead of slipping over to my side
And softly whispering in my ear, "Sweet lady,
"Your cousin there will do me detriment
"He little dreams of—he 's absorbed, I see,
"In my old name and fame—be sure he'll leave
"My Mildred, when his best account of me
"Is ended, in full confidence I wear
"My grandsire's periwig down either cheek.
"I'm lost unless your gentleness vouchsafes" . .

Tresh. . . "To give a best of best accounts, yourself,
"Of me and my demerits." You are right!
He should have said what now I say for him.
You golden creature, will you help us all?
Here 's Austin means to vouch for much, but you
—You are . . what Austin only knows! Come up,
All three of us—she 's in the Library
No doubt, for the day 's wearing fast! Precede!
Guen. Austin, how we must—!
Tresh. Must what? Must speak truth,
Malignant tongue! Detect one fault in him!
I challenge you!
Guen. Witchcraft 's a fault in him,
For you're bewitched.
Tresh. What 's urgent we obtain
Is, that she soon receive him—say, to-morrow—
Next day at farthest.
Guen. Ne'er instruct me!
Tresh. Come!
—He 's out of your good graces since, forsooth,
He stood not as he'd carry us by storm
With his perfections! You're for the composed,
Manly, assured, becoming confidence!
—Get her to say, "to-morrow," and I'll give you . .
I'll give you black Urganda, to be spoiled
With petting and snail-paces. Will you? Come!
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—MILDRED'S *Chamber. A painted window in the background.* MILDRED *and* GUENDOLEN.

Guen. Now, Mildred, spare those pains. I have not left
Our talkers in the Library, and climbed
The wearisome ascent to this your bower
In company with you,—I have not dared . .
Nay, worked such prodigies as sparing you
Lord Mertoun's pedigree before the flood,
Which Thorold seemed in very act to tell—
—Or bringing Austin to pluck up that most
Firm-rooted heresy—your suitor's eyes,
He would maintain, were gray instead of blue—
I think I brought him to contrition!—Well,
I have not done such things, (all to deserve
A minute's quiet cousin's-talk with you,)
To be dismissed so coolly!

Mil. Guendolen,
What have I done . . what could suggest . .

Guen. There, there!
Do I not comprehend you'd be alone
To throw those testimonies in a heap,
Thorold's enlargings, Austin's brevities,
With that poor, silly, heartless Guendolen's
Ill-timed, misplaced, attempted smartnesses—
And sift their sense out? now, I come to spare you
Nearly a whole night's labour. Ask and have!
Demand, be answered! Lack I ears and eyes?
Am I perplexed which side of the rock-table
The Conqueror dined on when he landed first,

Lord Mertoun's ancestor was bidden take—
The bow-hand or the arrow-hand's great meed?
Mildred, the Earl has soft blue eyes!
Mil. My brother—
Did he . . you said that he received him well?
Guen. If I said only "well" I said not much—
Oh, stay—which brother?
Mil. Thorold! who—who else?
Guen. Thorold (a secret) is too proud by half,—
Nay, hear me out—with us he 's even gentler
Than we are with our birds. Of this great House
The least retainer that e'er caught his glance
Would die for him, real dying—no mere talk:
And in the world, the court, if men would cite
The perfect spirit of honour, Thorold's name
Rises of its clear nature to their lips:
But he should take men's homage, trust in it,
And care no more about what drew it down.
He has desert, and that, acknowledgment;
Is he content?
Mil. You wrong him, Guendolen.
Guen. He 's proud, confess; so proud with brooding o'er
The light of his interminable line,
An ancestry with men all paladins,
And women all . .
Mil. Dear Guendolen, 'tis late!
When yonder purple pane the climbing moon
Pierces, I know 'tis midnight.
Guen. Well, that Thorold
Should rise up from such musings, and receive
One come audaciously to graft himself

Into this peerless stock, yet find no flaw,
No slightest spot in such an one . . .
Mil. Who finds
A spot in Mertoun?
Guen. Not your brother; therefore,
Not the whole world.
Mil. I'm weary, Guendolen.—
Bear with me!
Guen. I am foolish.
Mil. Oh, no, kind—
But I would rest.
Guen. Good night and rest to you.
I said how gracefully his mantle lay
Beneath the rings of his light hair?
Mil. Brown hair!
Guen. Brown? why it *is* brown—how could you know that?
Mil. How? did not you—Oh Austin 'twas, declared
His hair was light, not brown—my head!—and, look,
The moon-beam purpling the dark chamber! Sweet,
Good night!
Guen. Forgive me—sleep the soundlier for me!
[*Going, she turns suddenly.*
Mildred!
Perdition! all 's discovered.—Thorold finds
—That the Earl's greatest of all grandmothers
Was grander daughter still—to that fair dame
Whose garter slipped down at the famous dance!
[*Exit.*
Mil. Is she—can she be really gone at last?

My heart—I shall not reach the window! Needs
Must I have sinned much, so to suffer!
[*She lifts the small lamp which is suspended before the Virgin's image in the window, and places it by the purple pane.*
There! [*She returns to the seat in front.*
Mildred and Mertoun! Mildred, with consent
Of all the world and Thorold,—Mertoun's bride!
Too late! 'Tis sweet to think of, sweeter still
To hope for, that this blessed end soothes up
The curse of the beginning; but I know
It comes too late—'twill sweetest be of all
To dream my soul away and die upon!
[*A noise without.*
The voice! Oh, why, why glided sin the snake
Into the Paradise Heaven meant us both?
[*The window opens softly. A low voice sings.*

There 's a woman like a dew-drop, she 's so purer than the purest,
And her noble heart 's the noblest, yes, and her sure faith 's the surest:
And her eyes are dark and humid, like the depth on depth of lustre
Hid i' the harebell, while her tresses, sunnier than the wild-grape cluster,
Gush in golden-tinted plenty down her neck's rose-misted marble:
Then her voice's music . . call it the well's bubbling, the bird's warble!

[*A figure wrapped in a mantle appears at the window.*

And this woman says, "My days were sunless and my nights were moonless,
"Parched the pleasant April herbage, and the lark's heart's outbreak tuneless,
"If you loved me not!" And I who—(ah, for words of flame!) adore her!
Who am mad to lay my spirit prostrate palpably before her—

[*He enters—approaches her seat, and bends over her.*

I may enter at her portal soon, as now her lattice takes me,
And by noontide as by midnight make her mine, as hers she makes me!

[*The Earl throws off his slouched hat and long cloak.*

My very heart sings, so I sing, beloved!
Mil. Sit, Henry—do not take my hand.
Mer. 'Tis mine!
The meeting that appalled us both so much
Is ended.
Mil. What begins now?
Mer. Happiness
Such as the world contains not.
Mil. That is it.
Our happiness would, as you say, exceed
The whole world's best of blisses: we—do we
Deserve that? Utter to your soul, what mine
Long since, beloved, has grown used to hear,
Like a death-knell so much regarded once,
And so familiar now; this will not be!
Mer. Oh, Mildred, have I met your brother's face,
Compelled myself—if not to speak untruth

Yet to disguise, to shun, to put aside
The truth, as what had e'er prevailed on me
Save you, to venture? Have I gained at last
Your brother, the one scarer of your dreams,
And waking thoughts' sole apprehension too?
Does a new life, like a young sunrise, break
On the strange unrest of the night, confused
With rain and stormy flaw—and will you see
No dripping blossoms, no fire-tinted drops
On each live spray, no vapour steaming up,
And no expressless glory in the east?
When I am by you, to be ever by you,
When I have won you and may worship you,
Oh, Mildred, can you say "this will not be"?

Mil. Sin has surprised us; so will punishment.

Mer. No—me alone, who sinned alone!

Mil. The night
You likened our past life to—was it storm
Throughout to you then, Henry?

Mer. Of your life
I spoke—what am I, what my life to waste
A thought about when you are by me?—you
It was, I said my folly called the storm
And pulled the night upon.—'Twas day with me—
Perpetual dawn with me.

Mil. Come what, come will,
You have been happy—take my hand!

Mer. How good
Your brother is! I figured him a cold—
Shall I say, haughty man?

Mil. They told me all.
I know all.

Mer. It will soon be over.
Mil. Over?
Oh, what is over? what must I live thro'
And say, "'tis over?" Is our meeting over?
Have I received in presence of them all
The partner of my guilty love,—with brow
Trying to seem a maiden's brow—with lips
Which make believe that when they strive to form
Replies to you and tremble as they strive,
It is the nearest ever they approached
A stranger's . . Henry, yours that stranger's . . lip—
With cheek that looks a Virgin's, and that *is* . . .
Ah, God! some prodigy of thine will stop
This planned piece of deliberate wickedness
In its birth even—some fierce leprous spot
Will mar the brow's dissimulating—I
Shall murmur no smooth speeches got by heart,
But, frenzied, pour forth all our woeful story,
The love, the shame, and the despair—with them
Round me aghast as men round some cursed fount
That should spirt water, and spouts blood. I'll not
. . . Henry, you do not wish that I should draw
This vengeance down? I'll not affect a grace
That 's gone from me—gone once, and gone for ever!
Mer. Mildred, my honour is your own. I'll share
Disgrace I cannot suffer by myself.
A word informs your brother I retract
This morning's offer . . time will yet bring forth
Some better way of saving both of us.
Mil. I'll meet their faces, Mertoun!
Mer. When? to-morrow?
Get done with it!

Mil. Oh, Henry, not to-morrow!
Next day! I never shall prepare my words
And looks and gestures sooner!—How you must
Despise me!
Mer. Mildred, break it if you choose,
A heart the love of you uplifted—still
Uplifts, thro' this protracted agony,
To Heaven! but, Mildred, answer me,—first pace
The chamber with me—once again—now, say
Calmly the part, the . . what it is of me
You see contempt (for you did say contempt)
—Contempt for you in? I would pluck it off
And cast it from me!—but no—no, you'll not
Repeat that?—will you, Mildred, repeat that?
Mil. Dear Henry—
Mer. I was scarce a boy—e'en now
What am I more? And you were infantine
When first I met you—why, your hair fell loose
On either side!—my fool's cheek reddens now
Only in the recalling how it burned
That morn to see the shape of many a dream!
—You know we boys are prodigal of charms
To her we dream of—I had heard of one,
Had dreamed of her, and I was close to her,
Might speak to her, might live and die her own,
Who knew?—I spoke—Oh, Mildred, feel you not
That now, while I remember every glance
Of yours, each word of yours, with power to test
And weigh them in the diamond scales of Pride,
Resolved the treasure of a first and last
Heart's love shall have been bartered at its worth;
—That now I think upon your purity

And utter ignorance of guilt—your own
Or other's guilt—the girlish undisguised
Delight at a strange novel prize—(I talk
A silly language, but interpret, you !)
If I, with fancy at its full, and reason
Scarce in its germ, enjoined you secrecy,
If you had pity on my passion, pity
On my protested sickness of the soul
To sit beside you, hear you breathe, and watch
Your eyelids and the eyes beneath—if you
Accorded gifts and knew not they were gifts—
If I grew mad at last with enterprise
And must behold my beauty in her bower
Or perish—(I was ignorant of even
My own desires—what then were you ?) if sorrow—
Sin—if the end came—must I now renounce
My reason, blind myself to light, say truth
Is false and lie to God and my own soul ?
Contempt were all of this !

Mil. Do you believe . . .
Or, Henry, I'll not wrong you—you believe
That I was ignorant. I scarce grieve o'er
The past ! We'll love on—you will love me still !

Mer. Oh, to love less what one has injured ! Dove,
Whose pinion I have rashly hurt, my breast—
Shall my heart's warmth not nurse thee into strength ?
Flower I have crush'd, shall I not care for thee ?
Bloom o'er my crest my fight-mark and device !
Mildred, I love you and you love me !

Mil. Go !
Be that your last word. I shall sleep to-night.

Mer. This is not our last meeting ?

Mil. One night more.
Mer. And then—think, then!
Mil. Then, no sweet courtship-days,
No dawning consciousness of love for us,
No strange and palpitating births of sense
From words and looks, no innocent fears and hopes,
Reserves and confidences: morning 's over!
Mer. How else should love's perfected noontide follow?
All the dawn promised shall the day perform.
Mil. So may it be! but——
You are cautious, Love?
Are sure that unobserved you scaled the walls?
Mer. Oh, trust me! Then our final meeting 's fixed?
To-morrow night?
Mil. Farewell! Stay, Henry . . wherefore?
His foot is on the yew-tree bough—the turf
Receives him—now the moonlight as he runs
Embraces him—but he must go—is gone—
Ah, once again he turns—thanks, thanks, my love!
He 's gone—Oh I'll believe him every word!
I was so young—I loved him so—I had
No mother—God forgot me—and I fell.
There may be pardon yet—all 's doubt beyond.
Surely the bitterness of death is past!

[*Scene shuts.*

ACT II.

SCENE—*The Library.*

Enter LORD TRESHAM *hastily.*

This way—In, Gerard, quick!
[*As* GERARD *enters*, TRESHAM *secures the door.*
Now speak! or, wait—
I'll bid you speak directly. [*Seats himself.*
Now repeat
Firmly and circumstantially the tale
You've just now told me; it eludes me; either
I did not listen, or the half is gone
Away from me—How long have you lived here?
Here in my house your father kept our woods
Before you?
Ger. —As his father did, my lord.
I have been eating sixty years, almost,
Your bread.
Tresh. Yes, yes—You ever were of all
The servants in my father's house, I know,
The trusted one. You'll speak the truth.
Ger. I'll speak
God's truth: night after night . . .
Tresh. Since when?
Ger. At least
A month—each midnight has some man access
To Lady Mildred's chamber.
Tresh. Tush, "access"—

No wide words like "access" to me!
Ger. He runs
Along the woodside, crosses to the south,
Takes the left tree that ends the avenue . . .
Tresh. The last great yew-tree?
Ger. You might stand upon
The main boughs like a platform . . Then he . .
Tresh. Quick!
Ger. . . . Climbs up, and, where they lessen at the top,
—I cannot see distinctly, but he throws,
I think—for this I do not vouch—a line
That reaches to the Lady's casement.
Tresh. Which
He enters not! Gerard—some wretched fool
Dares pry into my sister's privacy!
When such are young it seems a precious thing
To have approached,—to merely have approached—
Got sight of the abode of her they set
Their frantic thoughts upon! He does not enter?
Gerard?
Ger. There is a lamp that 's full in the midst,
Under a red square in the painted glass
Of Lady Mildred's . .
Tresh. Leave that name out! Well?
That lamp?
Ger. —Is moved at midnight higher up
To one pane—a small dark-blue pane—he waits
For that among the boughs; at sight of that
I see him, plain as I see you, my lord,
Open the Lady's casement, enter there . . .
Tresh. And stay?

Ger. An hour, two hours.
Tresh. And this you saw
Once?—twice?—quick!
Ger. Twenty times.
Tresh. And what brings you
Under the yew-trees?
Ger. The first night I left
My range so far to track the stranger stag
That broke the pale, I saw the man.
Tresh. Yet sent
No cross-bow shaft thro' the marauder?
Ger. But
He came, my lord, the first time he was seen,
In a great moonlight, light as any day,
From Lady Mildred's chamber.
Tresh. [*After a pause.*] You have no cause—
—Who could have cause to do my sister wrong?
Ger. Oh, my lord, only once—let me this once
Speak what is on my mind! Since first I noted
All this, I've groaned as if a fiery net
Plucked me this way and that—fire, if I turned
To her, fire if I turned to you, and fire,
If down I flung myself and strove to die.
The lady could not have been seven years old
When I was trusted to conduct her safe
Thro' the deer-herd to stroke the snow-white fawn
I brought to eat bread from her tiny hand
Within a month. She ever had a smile
To greet me with—she . . if it could undo
What 's done to lop each limb from off this trunk . .
All that is foolish talk, not fit for you—
I mean, I could not speak and bring her hurt

For Heaven's compelling: but when I was fixed
To hold my peace, each morsel of your food
Eaten beneath your roof, my birth-place too,
Choked me. I wish I had grown mad in doubts
What it behoved me to do. This morn it seemed
Either I must confess to you, or die:
Now it is done, I seem the vilest worm
That crawls, to have betrayed my Lady!

Tresh. No—
No—Gerard!

Ger. Let me go!

Tresh. A man, you say—
What man? Young? Not a vulgar hind? What dress?

Ger. A slouched hat and a large dark foreign cloak
Wraps his whole form: even his face is hid;
But I should judge him young; no hind, be sure!

Tresh. Why?

Ger. He is ever armed: his sword
Projects beneath the cloak.

Tresh. Gerard,—I will not say
No word, no breath of this!

Ger. Thanks, thanks, my lord!
[*Exit.*

[TRESHAM *paces the room. After a pause,*
Oh, thought 's absurd!—as with some monstrous fact
That, when ill thoughts beset us, seems to give
Merciful Heaven that made the sun and stars,
The waters and the green delights of earth,
The lie! I apprehend the monstrous fact—
Yet know the Maker of all worlds is good,

And yield my reason up, inadequate
To reconcile what yet I do behold—
Blasting my sense ! There 's cheerful day outside—
This is my library—and this the chair
My father used to sit in carelessly,
After his soldier-fashion, while I stood
Between his knees to question him—and here
Gerard our gray retainer,—as he says,
Fed with our food from sire to son an age,—
Has told a story—I am to believe !
That Mildred . . . oh no, no ! both tales are true,
Her pure cheek's story and the forester's !
Would she, or could she, err—much less, confound
All guilts of treachery, of craft, of . . . Heaven
Keep me within its hand !—I will sit here
Until thought settles and I see my course.
Avert, oh God, only this woe from me !

[*As he sinks his head between his arms on the table* GUENDOLEN'S *voice is heard at the door.*

Lord Tresham ! [*She knocks.*] Is Lord Tresham there ?

[TRESHAM, *hastily turning, pulls down the first book above him and opens it.*

Tresh. Come in ! [*She enters.*
Ah Guendolen—good morning.

Guen. Nothing more ?

Tresh. What should I say more ?

Guen. Pleasant question ! more ?
This more ! Did I besiege poor Mildred's brain
Last night till close on morning with "the Earl"—
"The Earl"—whose worth did I asseverate

Till I am very fain to hope that . . . Thorold,
What is all this? You are not well!
Tresh. Who, I?
You laugh at me.
Guen. Has what I'm fain to hope
Arrived, then? Does that huge tome show some blot
In the Earl's 'scutcheon come no longer back
Than Arthur's time?
Tresh. When left you Mildred's chamber?
Guen. Oh late enough, I told you! The main thing
To ask is, how I left the chamber. Sure,
Content yourself, she'll grant this paragon
Of Earls no such ungracious . . .
Tresh. Send her here!
Guen. Thorold?
Tresh. I mean—acquaint her, Guendolen,—
—But mildly!
Guen. Mildly?
Tresh. Ah, you guess'd aright!
I am not well—there is no hiding it.
But tell her I would see her at her leisure—
That is, at once! here in the Library!
The passage in that old Italian book
We hunted for so long is found, say,—found—
And if I let it slip again . . you see,
That she must come—and instantly!
Guen. I'll die
Piecemeal, record that, if there have not gloomed
Some blot i' the 'Scutcheon!
Tresh. Go! or, Guendolen,
Be you at call,—with Austin, if you choose,—

In the adjoining gallery—There, go !
[*Exit* Guendolen.
Another lesson to me ! you might bid
A child disguise his heart's sore, and conduct
Some sly investigation point by point
With a smooth brow, as well as bid me catch
The inquisitorial cleverness some praise !
If you had told me yesterday, "There's one
"You needs must circumvent and practise with,
"Entrap by policies, if you would worm
"The truth out—and that one is—Mildred!"
There—
There—reasoning is thrown away on it !
Prove she's unchaste . . why you may after prove
That she's a poisoner, traitress, what you will !
Where I can comprehend nought, nought's to say,
Or do, or think ! Force on me but the first
Abomination,—then outpour all plagues,
And I shall ne'er make count of them !

Enter Mildred.

Mil. What book
Is it I wanted, Thorold? Guendolen
Thought you were pale—you are not pale ! That book?
That's Latin surely !
Tresh. Mildred—here's a line—
(Don't lean on me—I'll English it for you)
"Love conquers all things." What love conquers them?
What love should you esteem—best love?

Mil. True love.

Tresh. I mean, and should have said, whose love is best
Of all that love or that profess to love?

Mil. The list 's so long—there 's father's, mother's, husband's . . .

Tresh. Mildred, I do believe a brother's love
For a sole sister must exceed them all!
For see now, only see! there 's no alloy
Of earth that creeps into the perfect'st gold
Of other loves—no gratitude to claim;
You never gave her life—not even aught
That keeps life—never tended her, instructed,
Enriched her—so your love can claim no right
O'er hers save pure love's claim—that 's what I call
Freedom from earthliness. You'll never hope
To be such friends, for instance, she and you,
As when you hunted cowslips in the woods,
Or played together in the meadow hay.
Oh yes—with age, respect comes, and your worth
Is felt, there 's growing sympathy of tastes,
There 's ripened friendship, there 's confirmed esteem,
—Much head these make against the new-comer!
The startling apparition—the strange youth—
Whom one half-hour's conversing with, or, say,
Mere gazing at, shall change (beyond all change
This Ovid ever sang about!) your soul
. . . *Her* soul that is,—the sister's soul! With her
'Twas winter yesterday; now, all is warmth,
The green leaf's springing and the turtle's voice,
"Arise and come away?" Come whither?—far
Enough from the esteem, respect, and all

The brother's somewhat insignificant
Array of rights! all which he knows before—
Has calculated on so long ago!
I think such love, (apart from yours and mine,)
Contented with its little term of life,
Intending to retire betimes, aware
How soon the back-ground must be place for it,
I think, am sure, a brother's love exceeds
All the world's loves in its unworldliness.

Mil. What is this for?

Tresh. This, Mildred, is it for!
Oh, no, I cannot go to it so soon!
That 's one of many points my haste left out—
Each day, each hour throws forth its silk-slight film
Between the being tied to you by birth,
And you, until those slender threads compose
A web that shrouds her daily life of hopes
And fears and fancies, all her life, from yours—
So close you live and yet so far apart!
And must I rend this web, tear up, break down
The sweet and palpitating mystery
That makes her sacred?—You—for you I mean,
Shall I speak—shall I not speak?

Mil. Speak!

Tresh. I will.
Is there a story men could—any man
Could tell of you, you would conceal from me?
I'll never think there 's falsehood on that lip!
Say "There is no such story men could tell,"
And I'll believe you, tho' I disbelieve
The world . . the world of better men than I,
And women such as I suppose you—Speak!

[*After a pause.*] Not speak? Explain then! clear up all, then! Move
Some of the miserable weight away
That presses lower than the grave! Not speak?
Some of the dead weight, Mildred! Ah, if I
Could bring myself to plainly make their charge
Against you! Must I, Mildred? Silent still?
[*After a pause.*] Is there a gallant that has night by night
Admittance to your chamber?
[*After a pause.*] Then, his name!
Till now, I only had a thought for you—
But now,—his name!

Mil. Thorold, do you devise
Fit expiation for my guilt, if fit
There be! 'tis nought to say that I'll endure
And bless you,—that my spirit yearns to purge
Her stains off in the fierce renewing fire—
But do not plunge me into other guilt!
Oh, guilt enough! I cannot tell his name.

Tresh. Then judge yourself! How should I act? Pronounce!

Mil. Oh, Thorold, you must never tempt me thus!
To die here in this chamber by that sword
Would seem like punishment—so should I glide
Like an arch-cheat into extremest bliss!
'Twere easily arranged for me! but you—
What would become of you?

Tresh. And what will now
Become of me? I'll hide your shame and mine
From every eye; the dead must heave their hearts

Under the marble of our chapel-floor;
They cannot rise and blast you! You may wed
Your paramour above our Mother's tomb:
Our mother cannot move from 'neath your foot.
We two will somehow wear this one day out:
But with to-morrow hastens here—the Earl!
The youth without suspicion faces come
From Heaven, and hearts from . . . whence proceed
such hearts?
I have despatched last night at your command
A missive bidding him present himself
To-morrow here—thus much is said—the rest
Is understood as if 'twere written down—
"His suit finds favour in your eyes,"—now dictate
This morning's letter that shall countermand
Last night's—do dictate that!

Mil. But, Thorold—if
I will receive him as I said?

Tresh. *The Earl?*

Mil. I will receive him!

Tresh. [*Starting up.*] Ho there! Guendolen!

GUENDOLEN *and* AUSTIN *enter.*

And, Austin, you are welcome too! Look there!
The woman there!

Aus. and Guen. How? Mildred?

Tresh. Mildred once!
Now the receiver night by night, when sleep
Blesses the inmates of her father's house,
—I say, the soft sly wanton that receives
Her guilt's accomplice 'neath this roof that holds

You Guendolen, you Austin, and has held
A thousand Treshams—never one like her!
No lighter of the signal lamp her quick
Foul breath near quenches in hot eagerness
To mix with breath as foul! no loosener
Of the lattice, practised in the stealthy tread,
The low voice and the noiseless come-and-go!
Not one composer of the Bacchant's mien
Into—what you thought Mildred's, in a word!
Know her!

Guen. Oh, Mildred look at me, at least!
Thorold—she 's dead, I'd say, but that she stands
Rigid as stone and whiter!

Tresh. You have heard . . .

Guen. Too much! you must proceed no further!

Mil. Yes—
Proceed—All 's truth! Go from me!

Tresh. All is truth,
She tells you! Well, you know, or ought to know,
All this I would forgive in her—I'd con
Each precept the harsh world enjoins, I'd take
Our ancestors' stern verdicts one by one,
I'd bind myself before them to exact
The prescribed vengeance—and one word of hers,
The sight of her, the bare least memory
Of Mildred, my one sister, my heart's pride
Above all prides, my all in all so long,
Had scattered every trace of my resolve!
What were it silently to waste away
And see her waste away from this day forth,
Two scathed things with leisure to repent,
And grow acquainted with the grave, and die,

Tired out if not at peace, and be forgotten?
This were not so impossible to bear!
But this—that, fresh from last night's pledge renewed
Of love with the successful gallant there,
She'll calmly bid me help her to entice,
Inveigle an unconscious trusting youth
Who thinks her all that 's chaste, and good, and pure,
—Invite me to betray him . . who so fit
As honour's self to cover shame's arch-deed?
—That she'll receive Lord Mertoun—(that 's her phrase)—
This who could bear? Why, you have heard of thieves—
Stabbers—the earth's disgrace—who yet have laughed,
"Talk not of tortures to me—I'll betray
"No comrade I've pledged faith to"—you have heard
Of wretched women—all but Mildreds—tied
In wild illicit ties to losels vile
You tempt them to forsake, and they'll reply
"Gold, friends, repute, I left for him, I have
"In him, why should I leave him then for gold,
"Repute, or friends?" and you have felt your heart
Respond to these poor outcasts of the world
As to so many friends; bad as you please,
You've felt they were God's men and women still,
So not to be disowned by you! but she,
That stands there, calmly gives her lover up
As means to wed the Earl that she may hide
Their intercourse the safelier! and, for that,
I curse her to her face before you all!
Shame hunt her from the earth! Then Heaven do right

To both! It hears me now—shall judge her then!
[*As* MILDRED *faints and falls*, TRESHAM *rushes out.*
Aus. Stay, Tresham, we'll accompany you!
Guen. We?
What, and leave Mildred? We? why, where's my place
But by her side, and where's yours but by mine?
Mildred—one word—only look at me then!
Aus. No, Guendolen! I echo Thorold's voice!
She is unworthy to behold . .
Guen. Us two?
If you spoke on reflection and if I
Approved your speech—if you (to put the thing
At lowest) you, the soldier, bound to make
The King's cause yours, and fight for it, and throw
Regard to others of its right or wrong,
—If with a death-white woman you can help,
Let alone sister, let alone a Mildred,
You left her—or if I, her cousin, friend
This morning, playfellow but yesterday,
Who've said or thought at least a thousand times,
"I'd serve you if I could," should now face round
And say "Ah, that's to only signify
"I'd serve you while you're fit to serve yourself—
"So long as fifty eyes await the turn
"Of yours to forestall its yet half-formed wish,
"I'll proffer my assistance you'll not need—
"When every tongue is praising you, I'll join
"The praisers' chorus—when you're hemmed about
"With lives between you and detraction—lives
"To be laid down if a rude voice, rash eye,

" Rough hand should violate the sacred ring
" Their worship throws about you,—then, indeed,
" Who'll stand up for you stout as I ?" If so
We said and so we did, not Mildred there
Would be unworthy to behold us both,
But we should be unworthy, both of us,
To be beheld by—by—your meanest dog
Which, if that sword were broken in your sight
Before a crowd, that badge torn off your breast,
And you cast out with hootings and contempt,
—Would push his way thro' all the hooters, gain
Your side, go off with you and all your shame
To the next ditch you chose to die in ! Austin,
Do you love me ? Here 's Austin, Mildred,—here 's
Your brother says he don't believe one half—
No, nor half that—of all he 's heard ! He says,
Look up and take his hand !

Aus. Look up and take
My hand, dear Mildred !

Mil. I—I was so young !
Beside, I loved him, Thorold—and I had
No mother—God forgot me—so I fell !

Guen. Mildred !

Mil. Require no further ! Did I dream
That I could palliate what is done ? All 's true.
Now, punish me ! A woman takes my hand !
Let go my hand ! You do not know, I see—
I thought that Thorold told you.

Guen. What is this ?
Where start you to ?

Mil. Oh Austin, loosen me !
You heard the whole of it—your eyes were worse

In their surprise than Thorold's! Oh, unless
You stay to execute his sentence, loose
My hand! Has Thorold left and are you here?
Guen. Here, Mildred, we two friends of yours will wait
Your bidding; be you silent, sleep or muse!
Only, when you shall want your bidding done,
How can we do it if we are not by?
Here 's Austin waiting patiently your will!
One spirit to command, and one to love
And to believe in it and do its best,
Poor as that is, to help it—why, the world
Has been won many a time, its length and breadth,
By just such a beginning!
Mil. I believe
If once I threw my arms about your neck
And sunk my head upon your breast, that I
Should weep again!
Guen. Let go her hand now, Austin.
Wait for me.—Pace the gallery and think
On the world's seemings and realities
Until I call you. [*Exit* AUSTIN.
Mil. No—I cannot weep!
No more tears from this brain—no sleep—no tears!
O Guendolen, I love you!
Guen. Yes: and "love"
Is a short word that says so very much!
It says that you confide in me.
Mil. Confide!
Guen. Your lover's name, then! I've so much to learn,
Ere I can work in your behalf!

Mil. My friend,
You know I cannot tell his name.
Guen. At least
He *is* your lover? and you love him too?
Mil. Ah, do you ask me that?—but I am fallen
So low!
Guen. You love him still, then?
Mil. My sole prop
Against the guilt that crushes me! I say
Each night ere I lie down, I was so young,
I had no mother—and I loved him so!
And then God seems indulgent, and I dare
Trust him my soul in sleep.
Guen. How could you let us
E'en talk to you about Lord Mertoun then?
Mil. There is a cloud around me.
Guen. But you said
You would receive his suit in spite of this?
Mil. I say there is a cloud . .
Guen. No cloud to me!
Lord Mertoun and your lover are the same!
Mil. What maddest fancy . . .
Guen. [*Calling aloud.*] Austin! (Spare your pains—
When I have got a truth that truth I keep)—
Mil. By all you love, sweet Guendolen, forbear!
Have I confided in you . .
Guen. . . Just for this!
Austin!—Oh, not to guess it at the first!
But I *did* guess it—that is, I divined—
Felt by an instinct how it was—why else
Should I pronounce you free from all that heap
Of sins which had been irredeemable?

I felt they were not yours—what other way
Than this, not yours? The secret 's wholly mine!
Mil. If you would see me die before his face . .
Guen. I'd hold my peace! And if the Earl returns
To-night?
Mil. Ah, heaven, he 's lost!
Guen. I thought so! Austin!

Enter AUSTIN.

Oh where have you been hiding?
Aus. Thorold 's gone,
I know not how, across the meadow-land.
I watched him till I lost him in the skirts
Of the beech-wood.
Guen. Gone? All thwarts us!
Mil. Thorold too?
Guen. I have thought. First lead this Mildred to her room.
Go on the other side: and then we'll seek
Your brother; and I'll tell you, by the way,
The greatest comfort in the world. You said
There was a clew to all. Remember, sweet,
He said there was a clew! I hold it. Come!
[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The end of the Yew-tree Avenue under* MILDRED'S *window. A light seen through a central red pane.*

Enter TRESHAM *through the trees.*

Again here! But I cannot lose myself.
The heath—the orchard—I have traversed glades
And dells and bosky paths which used to lead
Into green wild-wood depths, bewildering
My boy's adventurous step; and now they tend
Hither or soon or late; the blackest shade
Breaks up, the thronged trunks of the trees ope wide,
And the dim turret I have fled from fronts
Again my step; the very river put
Its arm about me and conducted me
To this detested spot. Why then, I'll shun
Their will no longer—do your will with me!
Oh, bitter! To have reared a towering scheme
Of happiness, and to behold it razed,
Were nothing: all men hope, and see their hopes
Frustrate, and grieve awhile, and hope anew:
But I . . to hope that from a line like ours
No horrid prodigy like this would spring,
Were just as though I hoped that from these old
Confederates against the sovereign day,
Children of older and yet older sires

(Whose living coral berries dropped, as now
On me, on many a baron's surcoat once,
On many a beauty's wimple) would proceed
No poison-tree, to thrust from Hell its root,
Hither and thither its strange snaky arms.
Why came I here? what must I do!—[*A bell strikes*]
—a bell?
Midnight! and 'tis at midnight . . . Ah, I catch
—Woods, river, plains, I catch your meaning now,
And I obey you! Hist! This tree will serve!
[*He retires behind one of the trees. After a pause, enter* MERTOUN *cloaked as before.*
Mer. Not time! Beat out thy last voluptuous beat
Of hope and fear, my heart! I thought the clock
In the chapel struck as I was pushing thro'
The ferns. And so I shall no more see rise
My love-star! Oh, no matter for the Past!
So much the more delicious task to see
Mildred revive—to pluck out, thorn by thorn,
All traces of the rough forbidden path
My rash love lured her to! Each day must see
Some fear of hers effaced, some hope renewed!
Then there will be surprises, unforeseen
Delights in store. I'll not regret the Past!
[*The light is placed above in the purple pane.*
And see, my signal rises! Mildred's star!
I never saw it lovelier than now
It rises for the last time! If it sets
'Tis that the re-assuring sun may rise!
[*As he prepares to ascend the last tree of the avenue* TRESHAM *arrests his arm.*
Unhand me—peasant, by your grasp! Here 's gold.

'Twas a mad freak of mine. I said I'd pluck
A branch from the white-blossomed shrub beneath
The casement there! Take this, and hold your peace.

Tresh. Into the moonlight yonder, come with me!
—Out of the shadow!

Mer. I am armed, fool!

Tresh. Yes,
Or no?—You'll come into the light, or no!
My hand is on your throat—refuse!—

Mer. That voice!
Where have I heard . . no—*that* was mild and slow.
I'll come with you!

[*They advance to the front of the stage.*

Tresh. You're armed—that 's well.
Your name—who are you?

Mer. Tresham!—she is lost!

Tresh. Oh, silent? Do you know, you bear yourself
Exactly as in curious dreams I've had
How felons, this wild earth is full of, look
When they're detected, still your kind has look'd!
The bravo holds an assured countenance—
The thief is voluble and plausible—
But silently the slave of lust has crouched
When I have fancied it before a man!
Your name?

Mer. I do conjure Lord Tresham—ay,
Kissing his foot, if so I might prevail—
That he for his own sake forbear to ask
My name! As heaven 's above, his future weal
Or woe depends upon my silence! Vain!
I read your white inexorable face!

Know me, Lord Tresham !

[*He throws off his disguises.*

Tresh. Mertoun !

[*After a pause.*] Draw now !

Mer. Hear me

But speak first !

Tresh. Not one least word on your life !

Be sure that I will strangle in your throat
The least word that informs me how you live
And yet are what you are ! No doubt 'twas you
Taught Mildred still to keep that face and sin !
We should join hands in frantic sympathy
If you once taught me the unteachable,
Explained how you can live so, and so lie !
With God's help I will keep despite my sense
The old belief—a life like yours is still
Impossible ! Now draw !

Mer. Not for my sake,

Do I entreat a hearing—for your sake,
And most, for her sake !

Tresh. Ha, ha, what should I

Know of your ways ? A miscreant like yourself,
How must one rouse his ire ?—A blow ?—that 's great
No doubt, to him ! one spurns him, does one not ?
Or sets the foot upon his mouth—or spits
Into his face—come—which, or all of these ?

Mer. 'Twixt him, and me, and Mildred, Heaven be judge !

Can I avoid this ? Have your will, my Lord !

[*He draws, and, after a few passes, falls.*

Tresh. You are not hurt ?

Mer. You'll hear me now !

Tresh. But rise!

Mer. Ah, Tresham, say I not "you'll hear me now!"
And what procures a man the right to speak
In his defence before his fellow-man,
But—I suppose—the thought that presently
He may have leave to speak before his God
His whole defence?

Tresh. Not hurt? It cannot be!
You made no effort to resist me. Where
Did my sword reach you? Why not have returned
My thrusts? Hurt where?

Mer. My lord—

Tresh. How young he is!

Mer. Lord Tresham, I am very young, and yet
I have entangled other lives with mine.
Do let me speak—and do believe my speech,
That when I die before you presently,—

Tresh. Can you stay here till I return with help?

Mer. Oh, stay by me! When I was less than boy
I did you grievous wrong, and knew it not—
Upon my honour, knew it not! Once known,
I could not find what seemed a better way
To right you than I took: my life—you feel
How less than nothing had been giving you
The life you've taken! But I thought my way
The better—only for your sake and hers.
But as you have decided otherwise,
Would I had an infinity of lives
To offer you!—now say—instruct me—think!
Can you from out the minutes I have left
Eke out my reparation? Oh—think—think!
For I must wring a partial—dare I say,

Forgiveness from you ere I die?
Tresh. I do
Forgive you.
Mer. Wait and ponder that great word!
Because, if you forgive me, I shall hope
To speak to you of—Mildred?
Tresh. Mertoun,—haste
And anger have undone us. 'Tis not you
Should tell me for a novelty you're young—
Thoughtless—unable to recall the Past!
Be but your pardon ample as my own!
Mer. Ah, Tresham, that a sword-stroke and a drop
Of blood or two, should bring all this about!
Why, 'twas my very fear of you—my love
Of you—(what passion 's like a boy's for one
Like you?)—that ruined me! I dreamed of you—
You—all accomplished—courted every where—
The scholar and the gentleman. I burned
To knit myself to you—but I was young,
And your surpassing reputation kept me
So far aloof—oh, wherefore all that love?
With less of love my glorious yesterday
Of praise and gentle words and kindest looks
Had taken place perchance six months ago!
Even now—how happy we had been! And yet
I know the thought of this escaped you, Tresham!
Let me look up into your face—I feel
'Tis changed above me—yet my eyes are glazed—
Where? where? [*As he endeavours to raise himself his eye catches the lamp.*]
Ah, Mildred! What will Mildred do?
Tresham, her life is bound up in the life

That 's bleeding fast away !—I'll live—must live.
There ! if you'll only turn me I shall live
And save her ! Tresham—oh, had you but heard !
Had you but heard ! What right have you to set
The thoughtless foot upon her life and mine,
And then say, as we perish, "Had I thought,
"All had gone otherwise." We've sinned and die :
Never *you* sin, Lord Tresham !—for you'll die,
And God will judge you.

Tresh. Yes, be satisfied—
That process is begun.

Mer. And she sits there
Waiting for me.—Now say you this to her—
You—not another—say, I saw him die
As he breathed this—"I love her "—(you don't know
What those three small words mean) say, loving her
Lowers me down the bloody slope to death
With memories . . . I speak to her—not you
Who had no pity—will have no remorse,
Perchance intend her. . . . Die along with me,
Dear Mildred !—'tis so easy—and you'll 'scape
So much unkindness ! Can I lie at rest,
With rude speech spoken to you, ruder deeds
Done to you—heartless men to have my heart,
And I tied down with grave-clothes and the worm,
Aware, perhaps, of every blow—Oh God !—
Upon those lips—yet of no power to tear
The felon stripe by stripe ? Die, Mildred ! Leave
Their honourable world to them—for God
We're good enough, tho' the world casts us out !

[*A whistle is heard.*

Tresh. Ho, Gerard !

Enter GERARD, AUSTIN, *and* GUENDOLEN, *with lights.*

No one speak! you see what 's done!
I cannot bear another voice!

Mer. There 's light—
Light all about me and I move to it.
Tresham, did I not tell you—did you not
Just promise to deliver words of mine
To Mildred?

Tresh. I will bear those words to her.

Mer. Now?

Tresh. Now! Lift you the body, Gerard, and leave me
The head.

[*As they have half raised* MERTOUN, *he turns suddenly.*

Mer. I knew they turned me—turn me not from her!
There! stay you! there! [*Dies.*

Guen. [*After a pause.*] Austin, remain you here
With Thorold until Gerard comes with help—
Then lead him to his chamber. I must go
To Mildred.

Tresh. Guendolen, I hear each word
You utter—did you hear him bid me give
His message? Did you hear my promise? I,
And only I, see Mildred!

Guen. She will die.

Tresh. Oh no, she will not die! I dare not hope
She'll die. What ground have you to think she'll die?

Why, Austin 's with you !

Aus. Had we but arrived

Before you fought !

Tresh. There was no fight at all !

He let me slaughter him—these boys !—I'll trust

The body there to you and Gerard—thus !

Now bear him on before me.

Aus. Whither bear him ?

Tresh. Oh, to my chamber. When we meet there next,

We shall be friends.

[*They bear out the body of* MERTOUN.

Will she die, Guendolen ?

Guen. Where are you taking me ?

Tresh. He fell just here !

Now answer me. Shall you in your whole life

—You who have nought to do with Mertoun's fate,

Now you have seen his breast upon the turf,

Shall you e'er walk this way if you can help ?

When you and Austin wander arm in arm

Thro' our ancestral grounds, will not a shade

Be ever on the meadow and the waste—

Another kind of shade than when the night

Shuts the woodside with all its whispers up !

But will you ever so forget this night

As willingly to cross this bloody turf

Under the black yew avenue ? That 's well !

You turn your head ! and *I* then ?—

Guen. What is done

Is done ! My care is for the living. Thorold,

Bear up against this burthen—more remains

To set the neck to !

Tresh. Dear and ancient trees
My fathers planted, and I loved so well!
What have I done that, like some fabled crime
Of yore, lets loose a fury—free to lead
Her miserable dance amidst you all?
Oh never more for me shall winds intone
With all your tops a vast antiphony,
Demanding and responding in God's praise!
Hers ye are now—not mine! Farewell—Farewell!
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—MILDRED'S *Chamber.* MILDRED *alone.*

He comes not! I have heard of those who seemed
Resourceless in prosperity,—you thought
Sorrow might slay them when she listed—yet
Did they so gather up their diffused strength
At her first menace, that they bade her strike,
And stood and laughed her subtlest skill to scorn.
Oh, 'tis not so with me! the first woe fell,
And the rest fall upon it, not on me:
Else should I bear that Henry comes not?—fails
Just this first night out of so many nights?
Loving is done with! were he sitting now
As so few hours since, on that seat, we'd love
No more—contrive no thousand happy ways
To hide love from the loveless, any more!
I think I might have urged some little point
In my defence to Thorold; he was breathless

For the least hint of a defence; but no!
The first shame over, all that would might fall.
No Henry! Yet I merely sit and think
The morn's deed o'er and o'er. I must have crept
Out of myself. A Mildred that has lost
Her lover—oh, I dare not look upon
Such woe! I crouch away from it! 'Tis she,
Mildred, will break her heart, not I! The world
Forsakes me—only Henry 's left me—left?
When I have lost him, for he does not come,
And I sit stupidly . . . Oh Heaven, break up
This worse than anguish, this mad apathy,
By any means or any messenger!

Tresh. [*Without.*] Mildred!

Mil. Come in! Heaven hears me

[TRESHAM *enters.*] You? alone?
Oh, no more cursing!

Tresh. Mildred, I must sit.
There—you sit!

Mil. Say it, Thorold—do not look
The curse—deliver all you come to say!
What must become of me? Oh speak that thought
Which makes your brow and speech so pale!

Tresh. My thought!

Mil. All of it!

Tresh. How we waded—years ago—
After the water-lilies till the plash,
I know not how, surprised us and you dared
Neither advance nor turn back, so we stood
Laughing and crying until Gerard came—
Once safe upon the turf, the loudest, too,
For once more reaching the relinquished prize!

How idle thoughts are—some men's—dying men's!
Mildred,—

Mil. You call me kindlier by my name
Than even yesterday—what is in that?

Tresh. It weighs so much upon my mind that I
This morning took an office not my own!
I might . . of course, I must be glad or grieved,
Content or not, at every little thing
That touches you—I may with a wrung heart
Even reprove you, Mildred; I did more—
You must forgive me!

Mil. Thorold? do you mock? . .
Or no . . and yet you bid me . . say that word! . .

Tresh. Forgive me, Mildred!—are you silent, sweet?

Mil. [*Starting up.*] Why does not Henry Mertoun come to-night?
Are *you*, too, silent?

[*Dashing his mantle aside, and pointing to his scabbard which is empty.*
Ah, this speaks for you!
You've murdered Henry Mertoun! now proceed!
What is it I must pardon? This and all?
Well, I do pardon you—I think I do.
Thorold, how very wretched you must be!

Tresh. He bade me tell you . .

Mil. What I do forbid
Your utterance of! so much that you *may* tell
And will not—how you murdered him . . but, no!
You'll tell me that he loved me, never more
Than bleeding out his life there—must I say
"Indeed," to that? Enough! I pardon you!

Tresh. You cannot, Mildred! for the harsh words, yes:
Of this last deed Another's Judge—whose doom
I wait in doubt, despondency, and fear.
Mil. Oh true! there 's nought for me to pardon! True!
You loosed my soul of all its cares at once—
Death makes me sure of him for ever! *You*
Tell me his last words? *He* shall tell me them,
And take my answer—not in words, but reading
Himself the heart I had to read him late,
Which death . . .
Tresh. Death? you are dying too? Well said
Of Guendolen! I dared not hope you'd die—
But she was sure of it.
Mil. Tell Guendolen
I loved her, and tell Austin . . .
Tresh. . . Him you loved—
And me?
Mil. Ah Thorold! was't not rashly done
To quench that blood, on fire with youth and hope
And love of me, *you* loved I think, and yet
Suffered to sit here waiting his approach
While you were slaying him? Oh, doubtlessly
You let him speak his poor confused boy's-speech
—Do his poor utmost to disarm your wrath
And respite me!—you let him try to give
The story of our loves, and ignorance,
And the brief madness, and the long despair—
You let him plead all this, because your code
Of honour bids you hear before you strike—
But at the end, as he looked up for life

Into your eyes—you struck him down!
Tresh. No! no!
Had I but heard him—had I let him speak
Half the truth—less—had I looked long on him,
I had desisted! Why, as he lay there,
The moon on his flushed cheek, I gathered all
The story ere he told it! I saw thro'
The troubled surface of his crime and yours
A depth of purity immovable!
Had I but glanced, where all seemed turbidest
Had gleamed some inlet to the calm beneath!
I would not glance—my punishment's at hand.
There, Mildred, is the truth! and you—say on—
You curse me?
Mil. As I dare approach that Heaven
Which has not bade a living thing despair,
Which needs no code to keep its grace from stain,
But bids the vilest worm that turns on it
Desist and be forgiven,—I—forgive not,
But bless you, Thorold, from my soul of souls!
[*Falls on his neck.*
There! do not think too much upon the Past!
The cloud that 's broke was all the same a cloud
While it stood up between my friend and you!
You hurt him 'neath its shadow—but is that
So past retrieve? I have his heart, you know—
I may dispose of it—I give it you!
It loves you as mine loves! Confirm me, Henry!
[*Dies.*
Tresh. I wish thee joy, beloved! I am glad
In thy full gladness!
Guen. [*Without.*] Mildred! Tresham!

[*Entering with* AUSTIN.] Thorold,
I could desist no longer. Ah, she swoons!
That 's well—
Tresh. Oh! better far than that!
Guen. She 's dead!
Let me unlock her arms!
Tresh. She threw them thus
About my neck, and blessed me, and then died.
—You'll let them stay now, Guendolen!
Aus. Leave her
And look to him! What ails you, Thorold?
Guen. White
As she—and whiter! Austin—quick—this side!
Aus. A froth is oozing thro' his clenched teeth—
Both lips, where they're not bitten thro', are black!
Speak, dearest Thorold!
Tresh. Something does weigh down
My neck beside her weight—thanks—I should fall
But for you, Austin, I believe!—there—there—
'Twill pass away soon!—ah,—I had forgotten—
I am dying.
Guen. Thorold—Thorold—why was this?
Tresh. I said, just as I drank the poison off,
The earth would be no longer earth to me,
The life out of all life was gone from me!
There are blind ways provided, the foredone
Heart-weary player in this pageant-world
Drops out by, letting the main masque defile
By the conspicuous portal:—I am thro'—
Just through!—
Guen. Don't leave him, Austin! death is close.
Tresh. Already Mildred's face is peacefuller!

I see you, Austin—feel you—here's my hand,
Put yours in it—You, Guendolen, yours too!
You're Lord and Lady now—You're Treshams—Name
And fame are yours—You hold our 'Scutcheon up.
Austin, no Blot on it! You see how blood
Must wash one blot away: the first blot came
And the first blood came. To the vain world's eye
All's gules again—no care to the vain world
From whence the red was drawn!

Aus. No blot shall come!

Tresh. I said that—yet it did come. Should it come,
Vengeance is God's not man's. Remember me!
[*Dies.*

Guen. [*Letting fall the pulseless arm.*] Ah, Thorold we can but—remember you!

NOTES.

"A Blot in the 'Scutcheon."

This play was first performed at Drury Lane on February 11th, 1843, when Miss Helen Faucit took the part of Mildred Tresham, Mrs. Stirling that of Guendolen, and Mr. Phelps, Lord Tresham.

On the 27th of November—some five years later—the play was revived by Mr. Phelps, at Sadler's Wells Theatre, and proved a decided success. Mr. Phelps himself took the part of Lord Tresham, and Miss Cooper that of Mildred Tresham. It was excellently mounted, and well acted.

Not for some seven-and-thirty years after Mr. Phelps's revival was "A Blot in the 'Scutcheon" again put on the boards: when, on May 2nd, 1885, it was performed at St. George's Hall, under the direction of Mr. Charles Fry, and was a most interesting performance, Mr. Browning himself being present in a private box.

Three years later (March 18th, 1888) a still more interesting revival of the play has to be recorded, on this occasion under the auspices of the Browning Society. It was performed at the Olympic Theatre, Miss Alma Murray taking the part of Mildred Tresham. Mr. Browning and his sister were present on this occasion also.

In March, 1885, Mr. Lawrence Barrett gave a very successful performance of the play at Boston, U.S.A.

"Artemis Prologuizes."

This poem had been destined to form part of a longer composition, and was suggested by the "Hippolytos" of Euripides. Mr. Browning wrote concerning it:

"I had better say, perhaps, that the above is nearly all retained of a tragedy I composed, much against my endeavour, while in bed with a fever two years ago—it went further into the story of Hippolytus and Aricia ; but when I got well, putting only thus much down at once I soon forgot the remainder."

"Colombe's Birthday."

This play was first produced at the Haymarket Theatre on April 25th, 1853. Miss Helen Faucit undertook the character of Colombe, Mr. Barry Sullivan impersonating Valence.

In 1854 "Colombe's Birthday" was produced at the Harvard Athenæum, Boston, U.S.A., and was received with breathless attention and hearty applause.

On November 19th, 1885, the play was rev ved by the Browning Society, at St. George's Hall, Miss Alma Murray taking the part of Colombe. The performance was a most successful one.

"How they brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix."

Mr. Browning has distinctly stated that there is no sort of historical foundation for this poem : "I wrote it under the bulwark of a vessel off the African coast, after I had been at sea long enough to appreciate even the fancy of a gallop on the back of a certain good horse, 'York,' then in my stable at home. It was written in pencil on the fly-leaf of Bartoli's 'Simboli,' I remember."

"Luria."

This tragedy deals with one of the many hereditary outbreaks of feud between Florence and Pisa. At the beginning of the fifteenth century the early death of Galeazzo

Visconti had put an end, for a time, to the power of that ambitious and dangerous family in Florence. But Pisa, the old enemy of the Florentines, had fallen under the tyrannous supremacy of a member of the hated house of Visconti — Gabriello Maria, a son of Gian Galeazzo. Florence had thus a new cause of grievance against Pisa; she detested not only the city, but its ruler. In 1404 she fitted out an expedition against Pisa, and two years later captured the city, after a long and cruel siege. This is, apparently, the bare historical foundation of the play.

"The Glove."

This poem—the story of which has also been told by Schiller and Leigh Hunt—is of especial interest on account of the wide departure taken by Mr. Browning from the facts as narrated in the commonly accepted version.

"The Lost Leader."

This poem has probably given rise to more controversy than any other of Mr. Browning's compositions. But the question of its reference to Wordsworth has been set finally at rest by Mr. Browning himself, in a letter to Rev. A. B. Grosart, from which the following passage has been extracted:

"I did in my hasty youth presume to use the great and venerated personality of Wordsworth as a sort of painter's model, one from which this or the other particular feature may be selected and turned to account: had I intended more, above all such a boldness as portraying the entire man, I should not have talked about 'handfuls of silver and bits of riband.' These never influenced the change of politics in the great poet; whose defection, nevertheless, accompanied as it was by a regular face-about of his special party, was to my juvenile apprehension, and even mature consideration, an event to deplore."

"The Pied Piper of Hamelin."

This poem was written for, and inscribed to, William Macready, the eldest son of the celebrated actor. Young Macready had much talent for drawing, and on one occasion asked Mr. Browning to give him some subject for illustration; the result was the ever-popular "Pied Piper of Hamelin."

The story of the Piper was taken from one of the "Familiar Letters" of James Howell (Section vi., Letter xlvii.).

It is interesting to record that some year or two anterior to the date of the composition of "The Pied Piper," Mr. Browning's father had produced a poem founded upon the same legend. The MS. of this effusion is still extant.

"The Return of the Druses."

This play was originally christened "Mansoor the Hierophant," and under this title it was duly advertised at the end of the 1840 edition of "Sordello." In a letter addressed to Mr. Edmund Gosse on June 4th, 1879, Mr. Browning thus detailed his reason for making the change:

"'Mansoor' was one of the names of the third Vatemite Caliph, Biamvallah,—but the word 'Hierophant' was used inadvertently. I changed the title to 'The Return of the Druses,' and the name to 'Djabal.' It is very good of you to care about the circumstance."

"Waring."

The original of "Waring" was the late Mr. Alfred Domett, who was born at Camberwell, May 20th, 1811. He published a volume of poems in 1883; was called to the Bar at the Middle Temple in 1841; emigrated to New Zealand in 1842, and eventually became Premier of that Colony. He returned to England in 1871. In 1872 he published his chief poem, "Ranolf and Amohia, a South

Sea Day Dream." He died at Kensington, in November, 1887.

Several of the poems contained in "Bells and Pomegranates" had appeared previously in various periodicals, as follows :

"CLARET AND TOKAY."

Originally printed in "Hood's Magazine," vol i., No. vi., June, 1844, p. 525.

"FRANCE AND SPAIN."

Originally printed (under the title of "The Laboratory, *Ancien Régime*"), in "Hood's Magazine," vol. i., No. vi., June, 1844, pp. 513, 514.

"GARDEN FANCIES."

Originally printed in "Hood's Magazine," vol. ii., No. vii., July, 1844, pp. 45-48.

"MADHOUSE CELLS."—I.

"*There's Heaven above; and night by night :*"

Originally printed (under the title of "Johannes Agricola,") in "The Monthly Repository," vol. x., New Series, 1836, pp. 45, 46.

"MADHOUSE CELLS."—II.

"*The rain set early in to-night.*"

Originally printed (under the title of "Porphyria," in "The Monthly Repository," vol. x., New Series, 1836, pp. 43, 44.

"PIPPA'S SONG."

"*A King lived long ago.*"

Originally printed (with considerable variations) in "The Monthly Repository," vol. ix., New Series, 1835, pp. 707, 708.

Bells and Pomegranates.

"The Boy and the Angel."

Originally printed (with considerable variations) in "Hood's Magazine," vol. ii., No. viii., August, 1844, pp. 140-142. When the poem was reprinted in No. vii. of "Bells and Pomegranates," five new couplets were added.

"Flight of the Duchess."

Originally printed in "Hood's Magazine," vol. iii., No. iv., April, 1845, pp. 313-318.

"The Tomb at St. Praxed's."

Originally printed in "Hood's Magazine," vol. iii., No. ii., March, 1845, pp. 237-239.

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